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'Real Liberals' and Conservatives in the City of London 1848-1886

Volume One

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Abstract

This is not an economic history. Neither is it a post-modernist tract. Rather this thesis is a knowledge based history that examines the political and cultural life of the City of London between 1848 and 1886 alongside its financial and commercial institutions. In attempting this task it has not been assumed that the City's signifying character was necessarily to be found in the financial and commercial institutions of its dominant middle: the streets leading off the Bank of England. Instead the City's vital hub and essential nature have been sought in its places of religious worship, municipal politics, Livery Companies, and in its clubs and associations. All of these elements over the period under review became the domain of a reinvigorated Conservative party.

For this study, it is the view from the boundaries of the City that provide the best mirror back to its centre. By adopting a range of sources and approaches outside those usually employed by economic historians, the City's movement from Liberalism to Liberal Unionism and then to Conservatism is traced from its citizens defence of the City as a community during the Chartist threat of 1848, to its more general defence of property and the constitution in the years to 1886. The results suggest that the civic life of the City participated in a profound mutual interpenetration with the City's institutions of finance.

This is important, not least because it helps re-locate finance and commerce in contexts other than those of economics. Accordingly, although the City has been represented as a locality of unrivalled wealth, it might from this perspective become a contested space: at once modern and conservative; modern in its promotion of finance, conservative in its wish to preserve monuments to an older City. It was at the centre where capitalism conducted its business, but it was at the periphery where its civic life emanated. The emphasis then is not on economic interests, nor on the survival of the City Corporation as a unit of local government, but on the City's sense of shared community, belonging, or identity. Disputed representations of the City, either from the financial centre or the civic periphery, were politically contested and influenced the City's development as a whole.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Map	vi
Introduction	1
1. Ghosts in the City: The City of London as a Moral Community	29
2. Liberalism Divided: Politics in the City	59
3. The Livery Companies, Technical Education and the ‘Great Awakening’	85
4. ‘Real Liberals’, Conservatives and Associational Life in the City	109
5. The City, Imperialism, Liberty and the State	134
6. Representing the City: Politics and the Lord Mayor’s Show	159
Conclusion	186
Appendices I-V	191
Bibliography	340

Acknowledgements

Ideas for this thesis originated during a meeting of the Common Council of the City of London Corporation in Guildhall. It was either the morning after the great wind in 1987 or the day after Lawson's inflationary budget the year after - natural and human-made disasters fuse in the memory. I was an eager student at Ruskin College researching the closure of Spitalfields Market, a place I had known since I was a boy. Strange, I began to think, amid all this pomp and ceremony and 'ancient' ritual were modern concerns. Odd too, that although the City's civic life was apparently separate from the City of finance, obscenely rampant at this time, there were shared interests and more importantly, a definite sense of community belonging. It was from this moment that I began to collect debts of every kind.

My largest debts are to my mother, June Claus, my father Malcolm Claus and my brother, Ian Claus. They tolerated me out of love and supported me without question. My dearest friend, John Shaw, lent me his wide knowledge at crucial times in the torturous process and his boundless enthusiasm for history was always on tap. Martin Daunton, poor man, was my supervisor at University College, London and was courageous enough to take on, advise and encourage a student with endless educational and financial shortcomings. I must also thank my subsequent supervisors for their attention, and the Open University for its money. I also received financial help from the Pewterers' Company. My sincere thanks to various people who read early drafts of the thesis, among them Philip Williamson. He despaired of my allusive writing style as an undergraduate and found, it seems, only small improvement later. He did, though, thoroughly read the thesis and made crucial and invaluable suggestions. The final product is, without doubt, better for the wielding of his red pen. It has also been improved by Julia Beaurain's technical wizardry. Similarly, the librarians and archivists at the Guildhall Library and the City of London Corporation Record Office, preside over a wonderful public resource and were infinitely patient in all of their dealings with me. I would extend like sentiments to staff working in other repositories I have used.

Since my first attendance at that meeting of the Common Council I stayed many times at the welcoming home of Alison Light and Raphael Samuel, on the edge of the City. Although this work is dedicated to my parents, to my brother and to my new family Xavière Hassan and Avi Ohayon, it was written for Raph. Whatever its quality, however it is received, I am sure he would have reminded me that 'no work is wasted, Comrade'. For that thought at least, it has been worth it.

'Of this island, the centre is London; of London the heart is the City, and in the City you can put your finger on one spot where the pulse of the world is said distinctly to beat. The Muslim regards the Kaaba at Mecca as the centre of the Universe, but that is only a theological phrase. The Centre of the World is the Bank of England in Threadneedle Street. There is not an occurrence, not a conquest or a defeat, a revolution, a panic, a famine, an abundance, not a change in value of money or of material, no depression or stoppage in trade, no recovery, no political and scarcely any religious movement - say the civil disposition of the Pope or the Wahabee revival in Arabia or India - that does not report itself instantly at this sensitive spot. Other capitals feel a local influence; this feels all the local influences. Put your ear at the door of the Bank, or the Royal Stock Exchange near by, and you hear the roar of the World'.

John Yeats, from an article in the *Century Magazine*, November 1882 and quoted in his *Commercial Instruction. The Golden Gates of Trade with our Home Industries; introducing a Study of Mercantile Economy and of the Science of Commerce* (London, 1890), p. 53.



Figure One: Map Showing the Parishes and Wards of the City of London. Taken from the *City of London Directory* (Collingridge, 1891).

Introduction

To live or work in the City of London was, and is, to live or work in a moral community. This was true at the starting point of this thesis, the City's response to the Chartist march of 1848, and was as true at its terminal date when the unemployed marched on the City in 1886. By this time the City's resident population had for the most part departed, cleared by 'improvements' that widened streets and introduced modern transport into the City. Meanwhile, the population that remained had changed their political complexion, and with it their political loyalties. It is also true that those that worked within its walls were many in their occupations and equally diverse in their political and cultural lives. But the tradesmen, bankers, solicitors and lumpen-poor that lived or worked in the City not only breathed the same air but occupied the same civic space. Of course, this is not to suggest that the City's citizens were in any way classless, but they were undoubtedly linked by a shared sense of belonging to the largest and most forbidding city that the world had ever seen. If they were bound by community and family ties they also shared business interests. It was commonplace, for example, to find an apparently humble City wholesaler active on the board of a railway company, bank or insurance company. Conversely those who occupied the top of the social and economic tree dropped down a few branches to attend meetings of the local Ratepayers' Association or Livery Company, or less often to represent a locality in more mundane matters of municipal politics. By the end of the period these relationships had changed, although the connections between the City's financial institutions and its civic life were still in many ways umbilical.

Yet conventionally a close focus on the City of London in the second half of the nineteenth century would identify the small area immediately around the Bank of England as its vital hub or centre. The imperious monied institutions, Lloyds, the Stock Exchange and the like, are assumed to be modern and modernising and have been elevated into the dominant emblem of the City, while its social and political life has remained largely subordinate. In seeking to examine the City as a community alongside its more famous financial and commercial institutions, the aim is not just to redress an imbalance but to recast an understanding of the relationship between the institutions of the centre and the cultural life usually treated as peripheral. Quite often the City has been

conceived as a series of use zones, or to revive an older commentary on the growth of London, as a 'land of fragments'.¹ The result has been the study of this or that facet of the City at the expense of the whole. Examined together, however, it becomes obvious that the City Corporation existed in symbiosis with the financial institutions of the core. This is important, not least because it helps re-locate the man of business in contexts other than that of his economic life. His metamorphosis from radical tradesman to conservative businessman was very much an aspect of his ability to shift between the financial institutions and civic life of the City.

The extent of the co-habitation of financial and civic activity increased in the light of two factors. Firstly, the City was transformed from political radicalism in the 1830s, settling for a Whig-Liberal mix in mid-century, before becoming, after 1874, a point of convergence for late Victorian Conservatism. Secondly, depopulation gained pace as railways and new roads forced their way through supposedly ancient streets, antique churches and fondly remembered taverns. These fundamental changes allowed the building of banks and offices as the City renewed itself from the centre outwards. It has also produced a divided historiography. On the one hand we are presented with an account from economic historians that emphasises its functional importance within the wider economy, although David Kynaston has recently humanised this rather essentialist perspective.² On the other hand, the City of London Corporation is exclusively thought about within the context of local government. If economic history has believed the City to be modern, local government historians have treated the Corporation as a separate problem and condemned it as old fashioned and archaic.³ The tension apparent between economic histories and local government accounts reflect contemporary attempts, as we shall see in the course of the thesis, to negotiate the tensions between modernisation and conservation.

¹ H.J. Dyos and D A. Reeder, 'Slums and Suburbs', in H.J. Dyos and M. Wolff (eds.), *The Victorian City* (London, 1973), p.359; N.G. Brett-James, 'Precincts and Trade Quarters and a History of Use-Zones in the City of London' *The Architectural Review*, 100, 599, (1946), pp 129-134.

² David Kynaston, *The City of London - A World of Its Own* Vol. 1 (London, 1994); David Kynaston, *The City of London - Golden Years* Vol. 2 (London, 1995).

³ The only counterpoint to this dominant literature is an uncritical antiquarianism. Livery Companies and City wards have repeatedly been the subject of hagiography.

If some 125,000 people were recorded by the census as resident in the City in 1851, a massive 301,000 were found to be working there in May 1891 (Appendix One, Table One). In 1866 the total number of people frequenting the City daily was 728,986. The night population, thought to consist chiefly of caretakers of property and the humbler population, was 113,387, while the day population was 283,520.⁴ Similarly the 'night' census found only 356 merchants resident out of nearly 6,000 of the working population; nine bankers out of 263; and thirty-three brokers out of 3,297. A census taken at the end of the period (over a period of twenty-four hours) found that those entering the City on foot and in vehicles numbered 1,186,094, while vehicles alone totalled 92,372.

⁵ The rateable value of property rose in apparent correlation with the City's relative success and with it the price of land. The net rateable value of property in the City was £1,279,887 in 1861 and by 1891 it was £3,872,008. It was the increase in City property values that ended the previously common feature of mixed use property: perhaps a shop or tavern at the front, a warehouse or counting house to the rear, with accommodation above.

Jon Lawrence, attempting to make sense of the transformation from a residential City to a working City, matches a physical description of the built environment as a cultural form (associated with historical geographers) with a more sophisticated historical analysis of economic, social and political processes.⁶ His study was confined to the City's small central district and takes a 'snapshot' of the district's socio-economic structure for 1693, 1786, 1817, 1851 and 1871, although, as he readily admits, in isolation from the surrounding area. In this model, the precincts or trade quarters of the City were made up of textile trading in the Coleman Street ward to the north-east, as were the wards of Bassishaw and Cripplegate Within to the east. Lime Street hosted the specialist

⁴ (Corporation of London Record Office) B/39 *Day Census, City of London Report, Local Government and Taxation Committee 13 December 1866.*

⁵ Pascoe Grenfell Hill, *Letter to the Right Hon B.S. Phillips L.M. on Street Slaughter* (London, 1866) The clergyman of St Edmund the King and Martyr, Lombard Street estimated that road deaths up to 1865 were running at twenty-one per month. He commented that 'the sufferer generally belongs to a class as to have no means of obtaining redress.'

⁶ Jon Lawrence, *From Counting-House To Office: The Transformation of London's Central Financial District, 1693-1871* (forthcoming). I am grateful to Jon Lawrence for sending me this paper in advance of publication. For a rounded survey of both biological and cultural approaches to the urban see Peter Saunders, *Social Theory and the Urban Question* (London, 1992). The work of Henri Lefebvre in this respect has been in the useful employment of at least one historian. See P.J. Atkins, 'How the West End was won: the struggle to remove street barriers in Victorian London' *Journal of Historical Geography*, 19, 3, (1993), pp. 265-277. See also p.33, n.8 above.

commodity markets of coffee, tea and spices. The Colonial market could be found in the London Commercial Rooms in Mincing Lane; the book trade market in Paternoster Row near St. Paul's; and the Cornmarket in Mark Lane. In Lincoln's Inn and the Temple, lawyers found a quiet retreat. The fish and foreign fruit sellers were in Thames Street as were the wholesale Manchester warehouses. In Houndsditch, exotic food and cheap clothing could be found in the Jewish markets. Commerce was mainly represented by the Custom House, Corn Exchange and wharves located at the City's watery edge. Fenchurch Street was thought of as the home of shipping interests. Naturally, money interests were located in and around Lombard Street, with the remainder of the housing, shops and offices tucked away in the nooks and crannies of the City's 'medieval' alleys and streets. By the mid-point of the nineteenth century these zones of specialised commercial activity (Holywell Street, more unconventionally, was known for its contraceptives or, euphemistically, its 'French, Spanish or American goods') were discrete, each experiencing rapid expansion fuelled by the powerful engine of the City's imperial economy.⁷

A symptom of the rise in assessed rental values in the City was a 'changing workspace':- the growth of offices, banks and purpose-built commercial buildings.⁸ The new Royal Exchange (1844), Coal Exchange (1849), Stock Exchange (1854) and Wool Exchange (1874) joined the Globe Insurance in Cornhill (1836), the Phoenix Assurance in Lombard Street (1837) the Alliance Assurance in Bartholemew Lane (1841), the Imperial Assurance Office on the corner of Old Broad Street and Threadneedle Street in 1849, and the Royal Insurance Company which built two new offices in Lombard Street in 1857 and 1868. In the banking sector the head office of the London and Westminster Bank was built in Lothbury in 1838, and the Union Bank of London in Mansion Street, opposite the Bank of England, began building their premises in 1865, while the National Provincial Bank built theirs in the same year on the corner of Bishopsgate and Threadneedle Street. Throughout the period in question, buildings of royal size and design were being built and the City of

⁷ Jon Lawrence, *'From Counting-House to Office'*, p. 5; Peter Cunningham, *Handbook to London As It Is* (London, n.d.)

⁸ Testimony to this change was given by prominent architect and Common Councillor Edward L'Anson when he argued that land value, rather than any shortage of office provision, was the real impetus for growth. Edward L'Anson, 'On the Valuation of House Property in London' *Royal Institute of British Architects*, (1872-73), pp. 39, 40.

London, apparently a standard for modernity despite its small-scale employment patterns and its occasionally outdated work practices, was once again defined by its centre.⁹

Mirroring this attempt to analyse the City in its 'fragments', Ranald Michie, a prominent economic historian of the City, has attempted to gain a fuller understanding of the financial City by breaking up its constituent elements into distinct, functional categories.¹⁰ The Commercial City, for instance, was argued by Michie to be in decline from 1850. The growth of an integrated railway system and improvements in communications meant that within Britain the City was largely bypassed in the distribution of goods. The City retained a direct involvement in international commerce in three ways. The first was through its physical trade passing via City warehouses. The second could be found in its office trade that handled imports and exports external to Britain. The last was in 'futures' that dealt with traded commodities ahead of actual production or demand. In addition, Michie continues, the Credit City like the Capital City, sought to furnish loans through the money markets. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries this involved an increasing stream of capital running from the country banks to the London private bankers and onto the money markets in the City. Between the 1860s and 1880s this process had been formalised to the extent whereby national banking structures had been set up. For example, both Barclays and the National Provincial had established a national network of branches, while provincial banks such as the ostensibly Birmingham based Lloyds, moved operations to the City in 1884 and the Midland bank followed suit in 1891. Similarly, older London merchant banks such as Baring's and Rothchild's, were joined by newer firms such as Morgan's and Kleinwort's. By the 1860s there was a growing number of City based imperial and international banks, financing trade between Britain and other parts of the world. It was to the demand for long term credit - usually from overseas - that the Capital City responded. In this category, the funding of domestic housing and the national debt, may be contrasted with investment overseas. The former totalled £4.1 billion between 1865 and 1914, and was largely dedicated to infrastructural work commissioned by foreign governments and companies working abroad. The latter grew from £0.5 billion in 1856, to £7.3 billion in 1913.¹¹ The

⁹ John Summerson, 'The Victorian Rebuilding of the City of London' *London Journal*, 3, 2, November 1977, p.165; See David Kynaston, 'Golden Years', p.31.

¹⁰ The source for this section is R.C. Michie, *The City of London Continuity and Change 1850-1990* (London, 1992). I am grateful for Ranald Michie's comments on an earlier draft of this thesis.

¹¹ Michie, 'City of London', p. 111.

Client City, finally, serves to bring us even further up to date as its main task was to supply services rather than to deal in manufactured goods. It was, according to Michie, concerned with 'the sale of knowledge, experience and training'.¹² These three attributes were, in turn, applied to commerce, shipping, insurance, brokering, surveying, loss adjustment, accounting and auditing. Within all these areas, as in the City overall, we can detect a relatively rapid growth pattern. In the insurance market, for example, both Lloyds and the Alliance and Indemnity took on new business, with Lloyds paying out on policies placed abroad from 1886. The field of brokering expanded with Commercial Union, a company founded by London merchants and shippers in 1861, among them a leading City figure, Sir Henry Peek MP. By the 1880s accountants and auditors numbered 550 respectively, and their ranks were multiplying. For instance, City based accountants Whinney, Smith and Whinney's fee income went up from £8,873 in 1860 to £28,317 in 1910. Clearly, the economic activity of the City increased as it physically modernised. In the course of these changes the importance of the Stock Exchange heightened. Its membership went up from 1,400 in 1870 to 5,567 in 1905, causing some historians to imply wrongly - as they have done in the cases of the Bank of England and the Baltic Exchange - that this was the authentic voice of the City.¹³ In fact City voices were often shrill, more often selfish and oblivious to a wider national interest, but never did they speak in unitary tones. Indeed the generic label 'The City', within this context, is almost useless, either as a way of historically describing the affairs of this most eminent of localities, or as a way of analysing its competing interests. However, it - whatever 'it' in its diversity was - remained relatively successful and important to the imperial British economy.

(ii)

That the City was modern has been an obvious truism for many economic historians. From this standpoint, Martin Daunt's work of synthesis, like many others, relies on a particular comprehension of the City of London. Central to Daunt's case is the notion that the City in the second half of the nineteenth century can only be seen as a disparate, fluid and divided entity, not

¹² Michie, *'City of London'*, p. 148.

¹³ W.J. Reader, *A House in the City: A Study of the City and of the Stock Exchange* (London, 1979); J. Clapham, *The Bank of England* (Cambridge, 1984); H. Barty-King, *The Baltic Exchange* (London, 1977).

as a coherent interest.¹⁴ His aim is to challenge orthodox views that industrial 'interests' were subordinated to the 'interests' of the aristocracy or land-owning classes, and to question how far this orthodoxy explains Britain's relative economic decline.¹⁵ In setting himself this task he has in mind a City invested with power and importance at its centre, not the margins, a centre that has thought to be informed by a predominant set of cultural codes and assumptions. As part of this orthodoxy, Perry Anderson has addressed the notion that Britain's economic, political and cultural life were, in combination, responsible for relative economic decay, and has insisted that industry was always subordinate to the agrarian and aristocratic 'interest'.¹⁶ Using similar cultural categories, Wiener places emphasis on Britain's anti-entrepreneurial spirit, and its influence on the composition of the state. To Wiener, there was a culturally determined pre-modern and anti-modern bent, that produced a particular type of Englishness, which enhanced the role of the 'gentleman' at the expense of industry.¹⁷ In the same vein Mayer argues that the European *ancien regime* was maintained to at least 1914. As Britain was not an entrepreneurial but a rentier aristocratic country, land-based capital maintained a cultural dominance that shaped the industrial bourgeoisie, a high concentration of land (and therefore wealth) left its owners free to maintain tenant farmers, and by doing so, it opened up opportunities to engage in politics.¹⁸

In the view of Anderson, Wiener and Mayer, the British state was, unlike other countries, fixed before industrialisation, untroubled by political or economic change and unchallenged in its power. It was therefore unsuitable as a means for addressing the decline of British capitalism. Its social and economic rulers were, it is argued, not an open elite, welcoming to rising classes, but a closed grouping, which by aligning landed aristocracy with merchant bankers in the City, led to an

¹⁴ M.J. Daunt, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Industry 1820-1914', *Past and Present*, 122 (1989), pp. 119-158.

¹⁵ For the role of the City in Britain's relative economic decline see for example, M. H. Best and J. Humpries, 'The City and Industrial Decline', in B. Elbaum and W. Lazonick (eds.), *The Decline of the British Economy* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 223, 236.

¹⁶ P. Anderson, 'The Figures of Descent', *New Left Review*, 161 (1987), pp. 20-78. This Olympian debate has a longer pedigree. See Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis', *New Left Review*, 23 (1962); and in reply E.P. Thompson, 'The Peculiarities of the English' in the *Poverty of Theory and Other Essays* (London, 1978), pp. 245-303. For a later contribution, Ellen Meitkens, *The Pristine Culture of Capitalism* (London, 1992); Perry Anderson, 'A Culture in Contraflow', *New Left Review*, 180, (1990), pp. 41-78 and *New Left Review*, 182, (1990), pp. 85-137.

¹⁷ M.J. Wiener, *English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit 1850-1980* (Cambridge, 1981).

¹⁸ A. J. Mayer, *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War* (London, 1981).

hegemonic coalition of 'gentleman capitalists', searching for social acceptance, while distancing themselves from industry.¹⁹ This 'separation of interests' between industry, on the one hand, and land and finance on the other, led to government policy favouring the City at the expense of industry. Or conversely, according to Ingram, maintaining a 'dual character - as the first industrial economy and as the world's major commercial entrepot'.²⁰ It was a 'dual process', with many industrial revolutions divided by sector and region. The main divide was between a producers' North - industrial, loyal to free trade, and hostile to the Lords and land - and a consumers' South - supporting protection, the Lords and landowners, as well as incorporating the overwhelming interests of the City. It was, however, a divide interrupted in the 1830s by what Rubinstein calls the end of 'Old Corruption'.²¹ This circumstance, he insists, not only led to the segregation of landowners from the commercial and industrial middle classes, but produced a dichotomy within the middle classes themselves. The passing of the First Reform Act in 1832 meant that as rich financiers rose in importance, the middle class which had benefited from the aristocratic state diminished. Increasingly, as landowners profited from farming, coal royalties and urban ground rents, the commercial middle class turned away from the British state and towards financing overseas trade.²²

The result was a 'gentlemanly capitalism' that, according to P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, was a home-grown export that financed investment elsewhere, and sponsored imperialism. The peculiar nature of this phenomenon, shaped by the pre-capitalist character of the aristocracy and moulded by incomes from commercial agriculture, was thought to be the most important

¹⁹ H. J. Perkin, *The Origins of Modern English Society, 1780-1880* (London, 1969); Anderson, 'Figures of Descent', p.28; L. and J. C. F. Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880* (Oxford, 1984); W. D. Rubinstein, 'New Men of Wealth and the Purchase of Land in Nineteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 92, (1981), pp. 125-47.

²⁰ G. Ingram, *Capitalism Divided? The City and Industry in British Social Development* (Basingstoke, 1984), p. 19.

²¹ W. D. Rubinstein, 'The End of 'Old Corruption' in Britain, 1780-1860', *Past and Present*, 76, (1977), pp. 55-86.

²² For another view, see Geoffrey Ingram, 'Commercial Capital and British Development', *New Left Review*, 172, (1988), pp. 45-65.

characteristic of the British economy.²³ The attendant values of easy and rustic living, of paternalism and the cult of the amateur, of contempt for the everyday world of wealth, and so on, infected both the industrial and financial sectors. The consequences for the City, the argument runs, was that status was awarded to those who were 'something in the City' and who, as important merchants or bankers, could distance themselves from the shopocracy of the nation. In one stroke then, although land, industry and finance were united around one leitmotif, that of 'gentlemanly capitalism', the respective 'interests' were divided. This meant that in the City, at least, the middle classes were consigned into two camps. In one were the merchants and financiers who occupied the cultural centre, while those engaged in trade and members of the professions took their place on the periphery. According to Rubinstein, it was a pattern interrupted once again around 1886 when this particular state formation came to an end. As landed incomes began to fall in the 1880s in the face of imports of foreign food, the City acted as the mainstay of the aristocracy. By doing so, the commercial and financial elite came together with land, while industry once again remained apart. Although he maintains the notion of a dichotomy *within* the middle class, Rubinstein would concur with Cain and Hopkins in one respect: this was indeed the time when the finance and service sector, based in the City and the south-east, gained added importance and power.²⁴

What we have then are a series of historical 'arches' constructed to cut a pathway to modernity, and designed by their architects (Anderson or Rubinstein, marxist or otherwise) to protect us from the debris of historical particularity, nuances, contextualisation, and discrete social groupings or localities.²⁵ At the end of these arches we can just glimpse the 'victory' of the aristocracy or the south or the land, as well as the 'failure' of the middle classes. In most versions, however, the separation of interests survives. As one of these interests the City has attracted much

²³ P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas 1. The Old Colonial System, 1688-1850', *Economic History Review*, xxxix, 4, (1986), p. 506, 508; P.J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas 11: New Imperialism, 1850-1945', *Economic History Review*, (1987), pp.1-26. These arguments have threatened to breed a considerable literature. A seminar on the subject was hosted by Cain and Hopkins at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge in May 1994. For an interesting commentary see Geoffrey Ingram 'British Capitalism: Empire, Merchants and Decline', *Social History*, 20, 3, October (1995), pp. 339-553.

²⁴ Cain and Hopkins, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas', p.525; W.D. Rubinstein, 'The Victorian Middle Classes: Wealth, Occupation and Geography', *Economic History Review*, xxx, (1977), pp. 602-623.

²⁵ Michael Barratt Brown makes similar points in Michael Barratt Brown, 'Away With All the Great Arches: Anderson's History of British Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 167, (1988), pp. 22-55.

attention. Cassis describes how 'the formation of a renewed elite', added, by a process of intermarriage, the power of the City to the prestige of the aristocracy.²⁶ On the other hand, for Lisle-Williams, intermarriage is a consequence of the mercantile and aristocratic alliance rather than a cause. The durability of family capitalism among merchant bankers within a 'gentlemanly organisation' produced a 'community like social system' rather than one of 'competitive openness'.²⁷ Either way, both commentators suggest a cultural assimilation of bankers with the values of the aristocracy. Once again a section of the middle classes, the shopocracy, are neglected, omitted from the equation, squeezed or hidden by the overweening concentration on economic interests.

Rubinstein echoes these findings, and compounds the problem by chronicling some of the larger fortunes made within the square mile. In a forensic debate, Daunton questions the reliability of Rubinstein's use of probates, land purchase records, and income tax returns as sources.²⁸ According to Daunton, the City was not a supplicant but a victim of a cycle of inheritance and succession within family firms, its fluidity and openness caused a high turnover of companies, while the commodity cycle, far from allowing an easy assimilation of aristocratic values, brought with it new trades and merchants.²⁹ The wider picture, while leaving little room for the mistaken convention that feudal and aristocratic power survived at the expense of the middle class, creates space for a closer examination of the elements that made up the changing City. This is an opportunity missed by Rubinstein. In his trenchant rejection of the 'cultural critique' as a tool that might prise open the secret of Britain's relative economic decline, he points instead, and above all, to the failure of the middle classes in the Victorian era. This was a failure, he insists, that not only saw a fundamental split between London and the north of England, but also within the City between

²⁶ Y. Cassis, 'Bankers and English Society in the Late Nineteenth Century', *Economic History Review*, xxxviii, (1985), pp. 210-229.

²⁷ M. Lisle-Williams, 'Merchant Banking Dynasties in the English Class Structure, Ownership, Solidarity and Kinship in the City of London, 1850-1960', *British Journal of Sociology*, xxxv, (1984), pp. 333-362.

²⁸ M. J. Daunton, 'Debate 'Gentlemanly Capitalism' and British Industry 1820-1914', *Past and Present*, 132, (1991), pp.150-187. According to Daunton, probate records exclude certain types of property. Equally, Rubinstein dismisses the importance of inter vivos gifts. Both factors, it is convincingly argued, distort Rubinstein's conclusions. The case against Rubinstein, in my view, is made conclusively by Daunton and further comments will reflect this fact.

²⁹ Daunton, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism', p. 147.

the wealthy financial magnates of the centre and the relatively peripheral membership of the Livery Companies.³⁰

Once again broad socio-economic categories are placed *en bloc*, one set against the other like opposing armies or tribes. Characteristically, given the choice, Rubinstein is more concerned with the Chiefs than the Indians. His consideration of the wealthy and the elite in the City obscures a politics that did not involve leadership or direct power: the 'second rank' or the 'less successful'. His evidence seems mainly sketched from his own (unpublished) analysis of the business interests of successive Lord Mayors and is extended to the nature of parliamentary representation.³¹ Nowhere does Rubinstein in his positivist conception of the modern consider the contextual, the everyday, the mundane, the familial, the intuitive, indeed the peripheral: in short the City's diverse and changing politics. How did important City figures connect to the tradesman, professional or even the clerks that were occupying the physical and imaginative space of the City? This is a pertinent question, since it has been recognised elsewhere that the sweep of occupations within the square mile ranged from the aristocrat to the humble clerk and through its institutions, coupled the powerful with the marginal, the respectable with the shady and dishonourable.³² Or, as it has also been noted, the social and civic network of the City became one way that its business and political life could coalesce.³³ Rubinstein realises that the study of elite's and institutions makes for a narrow conceptualisation of the City but, despite this, chooses to persevere instead with a juxtaposition of its upper echelons with traditional landed society.

So Rubinstein's history, at least in the City, is conducted in the political, but more usually, in the economic stratosphere amongst the rich and powerful while, at the same time, the City's changing and wide-ranging middle classes, let alone the minorities and outsiders that serviced its informal economy, are (obviously) denied even a probate check. Rubinstein is essentially an historian of the economics of high culture, or what he labels national culture.³⁴ He recognises the

³⁰ W. D. Rubinstein, *Capitalism, Culture, and Decline 1750-1990* (London, 1993), pp. 146-147.

³¹ Rubinstein, '*Capitalism*', p. 147, n. 20.

³² P.J. Cain & A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism- Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (New York, 1993), p.131; P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism Crisis and Deconstruction 1914-1990* (New York, 1993).

³³ Youssef Cassis, *La City De Londres 1870-1914*, preface by Alain Plessis (Belin, 1987), p. 12. I am in debt to Xavière Hassan for a partial English translation.

³⁴ Rubinstein, '*Capitalism*', cf, p.47.

elements that made up the modern City of London, but as he soars with the wealthy and the elite, he seldom, it appears, looks down far enough, or long enough, to either give them much credence, or find a way of including them in his model. The overall weakness of his approach has been thoroughly discussed, but it becomes painfully apparent when an adequate definition of what constitutes the middle class is sought. Faced with several options, he finally settles for a term that includes, 'everyone receiving his income chiefly in the form of profits, fees or salaries, as opposed to rent (as do landowners) or wages (as do manual workers)'.³⁵ This has the advantage of excluding two important sectors. It is less successful, however, when probed by Rubinstein's chosen methodology, the so-called 'blunt instrument of probate'.³⁶ The result is that while he is quite able to point to the 'supremacy' of London and its location as the 'home *par excellence* of the Victorian middle classes' he is, at the same time, obliged to insist on the homogeneity of that class by 1900: the nature, after all, of one block or interest facing another.³⁷

Absent, in consequence, like the retailer or small producer, are the marginal City workers, or those that have been thought of since Mayhew, as 'characters'.³⁸ These 'City spectres', as one contemporary thought of them, were victims of economic insecurity. As cleaning women, for instance, who took the early train and found refuge in church clubs, or the 'alleymen' who dealt in unofficial stocks and shares, or the bank clerk that lived near enough to London to combine City work with subsistence farming, they remained - to adopt a recurring label of social history - outcast.³⁹ Others, more central to the City's institutions, clung to their place in the pecking order and were satirised for their caution, steadfastness and deference to those above them.⁴⁰ Members of the City Corporation have often been caricatured in this way. Yet the City's civic representatives often combined trading careers with notable banking, insurance and mercantile interests, infiltrating the financial centre but with their influence stretching beyond the City's limits and into the Home

³⁵ W. D. Rubinstein, 'The Size and Distribution of the English Middle Classes in 1860', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, lxi, (1988), pp. 65-89.

³⁶ Daunt, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism', p. 124.

³⁷ Rubinstein, 'Capitalism', p. 31.

³⁸ Peter Quennell, *Mayhew's Characters* (London, n.d.).

³⁹ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London. A Study in the Relationship Between Classes in Victorian Society* (London, 1984).

⁴⁰ George & Weedon Grossmith, *Diary of a Nobody* (Hertfordshire, 1994).

Counties. That the one influenced the other, that shifting identities were as important as economic interests to the life of the City, is axiomatic to this thesis and forms the empirical foundations of its entire structure. (Appendix Two) Indeed, the cross-fertilisation between City 'interests' that extended from the civic City to the financial City, is demonstrated in a prosopographical chart listing every Common Councilman, Alderman and Lord Mayor (the latter two categories shaded in bold) that held office in the City of London Corporation between 1850 and 1890. It details their interests, not only as municipal servants, but as Liverymen, clubmen, parliamentarians and so on, while also tracing their influence in City business. As Common Councilmen were and are considered to be 'lesser mortals' in the Corporation's hierarchy this has not been an easy task. One useful source, however, is an index to the annual lists of the Common Councilmen from 1780-1879. It was originally drawn from the Corporation Pocket Books and compiled by Percival Boyd in 1933.⁴¹ The list was incomplete in a number of respects. It was therefore necessary to complete the inventory to 1890 and to check the existing data from 1860 to the close of the period against information provided in London Directories, particularly the annual *City of London Directory*.⁴² These basic facts were supplemented by records and minutes from the City Companies, City clubs and associations, parliamentary papers, obituaries from contemporary newspapers, and a range of primary and secondary sources.⁴³ This research inevitably threw light on the religion, politics and attitudes of

41 City of London Common Councillors 1780-1879. An index of the annual members of the Common Council in the Corporation Pocket Books, compiled by Percival Boyd (Unpublished, 1933). This is housed in the Guildhall Library in the printed books section.

42 See the invaluable guide to these sources, P.J. Atkins, *The Directories of London, 1677-1977* (London, 1990).

43 My thanks to Martin Dauntton who gave over to me his research in this area. Also consulted was Alfred B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London* (London, 1908); (Greater London Record Office CRG 402-1) C.L.U. *List of Guardians and Officers 1867-1868*; James Anderton, *Cheap Gas! Who's Who, in the City Philanthropists etc* (London, 1850; *Committee Minutes of the Court of Common Council, Court of Aldermen; Dictionary of National Biography; Boase's; Times; City Press*; Michael Stenton, *Who's Who of British Members of Parliament Volume One 1832-1988-A Biographical Dictionary of the House of Commons* (Sussex, 1976); William Matthews, *British Autobiographies-An Annotated Bibliography of British Biographies Published or Written Before 1851* (California, 1955); Richard Armband and Malcolm Rogers (eds). *Dictionary of British Portraiture, Volume Three, 'The Victorians. Historical Figures Born Between 1800-1860'*, compiled by Elaine Kilmurray (London, 1981); (PP) *Returns of the Number and Names of the Different Wards within the City of London, with the Number of Aldermen and Common Councilmen* (June, 1851); (PP) *A Return of the Number of Electors in Each Ward of the City of London; and of the Number of Aldermen and Common Councilmen elected by Each ward, and their Occupations* July, 1865; (PP) *Return of the Number of Liverymen in the City of London entitled to Vote at the Election of Members of Parliament by reason of their Patrimony, Servitude, or Purchase in any of the Companies, arranged by order of their respective Companies, August, 1876*; (PP) *Return of the Number of Electors in Each Ward of the City of London, and of the Number of Aldermen and*

the representatives of the City's electoral constituency. It also assisted the process of gaining a greater understanding of the City of London Corporation and its Liveries and provided, moreover, new insights into a City of finance considered by Rubinstein and others to be separate and distinct.

The intention was to utilise this information in order to retrieve these hitherto marginal lives, but to go beyond this and to connect them, their businesses and associations, to those more historically famous and who were thought previously to be functioning exclusively within the institutions of the financial centre. Thus it will be seen that the radical or Socialist, the misfit or the awkward, as they are often portrayed in the literature, were not wholly purged from the City, even by the 1890s. As social class and occupation within the square stretched to those who worked within the informal economy, most were linked to some extent by the City's associational life and the conviviality of its social and civic networks. These networks were disparate and various, but if their influences met and commingled anywhere it was through contact, in one respect or another, with the City of London Corporation.

(iii)

If economic accounts of the City have necessarily emphasised its financial institutions over its social and political life this omission has only partially been corrected by historians of London government. Most of the rights and privileges claimed by what was ostensibly the local authority of the City, were granted by Royal Charter. Both Edward III and Charles I donated conserving rights over a number of monopolies extending to a radius of seven miles and beyond from the centre of London. These included a monopoly enjoyed by the Fellowship of Porters to carry corn and other measurable goods within the Port of London; the right of metage; the right to levy charges for some goods imported by sea; rights over local markets and the right to collect coal dues brought into London within a twenty mile radius. The City of London Corporation, which by mid-century had earned its seasoned, although not its archaic reputation, had at its pinnacle the Lord Mayor accompanied by two Sheriffs at the top of a pyramid of three Courts. The first was the Court of Aldermen of whom twenty-six were elected for life, one for each ward; the Court of Common Council whose 206 members were elected annually by the Freemen of the wards, and the Court of

Common Councilmen elected by each Ward, and their Occupations and Addresses, etc August, 1882.

Common Hall which was comprised of Liverymen of the City Companies or guilds. Here elections were held for the ward officers, clerks, beadles, constables, and when a vacancy occurred annually, the Lord Mayor as Chief Magistrate.

At the onset of the nineteenth century the Court of Aldermen had become the most prominent of the three, but with the Court of Common Hall (the forum of the Liveries) regarding itself as the most legitimate voice of the City, a constitutional power imbalance in favour of the Livery Companies that was to increase as the century wore on. Between 1850 and 1890 income for the Corporation (particularly from freehold property and general rents) more than trebled, as rateable values in the City rose to an unprecedented level. However, the City Corporation's assets were in advance of its democracy. Threatened by the Whig reforms of the 1830s, it had been decided that it would no longer be necessary for applicants for the civic Freedom of the City also to be members of a Livery Company. Before this date Freedom (and with it voting rights) could be secured by three methods: patrimony, servitude and redemption. However, whether rights were inherited, came with apprenticeship or were bought, a citizen had to demonstrate civic merit within one of the, at this time, declining Livery Companies. The 1830s reform in effect created two constituencies. First were those meeting in Common Hall who had to be Freemen but did not have to reside in the City, yet had the power to elect the Lord Mayor. The second constituency were the residents or occupiers in the wards of the City, who through their wardmotes elected the Common Councilmen and the Aldermen. As it was no longer essential to be a member of a Livery Company to gain admittance into the Freedom and citizenship of the City, an anomaly was created. The majority of the voters in Common Hall, which as the century wore on recruited members from far and wide, could not vote in the wards, and the majority of the voters in the wards were not entitled to vote in Common Hall. The result was that one set of interests predominated in the election of a Lord Mayor, recruited from the ranks of the Aldermen, and another in the election of Common Councilmen. The City Corporation, by appearing to jettison the Livery Companies, had made itself a more difficult target for its opponents to hit, but it raised at the same time another set of problems. How could the eligible constituency in the wards be prevented from declining as the City lost its resident population, leaving the Corporation open to the charges that it was no longer useful, that it was run by a clique and that it remained unrepresentative? In the 1830s and most of the 1840s the answer was to 'encourage' wholesalers and retailers to become Freemen of the City. After this the Corporation

began the incremental introduction of ratepaying as the basis of citizenship, a measure that was finally introduced in full in 1867. The larger point here is that by establishing ratepaying as the basis of the franchise as well as the Freedom a new category of people, more connected to the financial institutions, came to have a decisive say in the election and running of the Corporation, thus uniting to some extent City high finance and trade for the first time since the early eighteenth century.⁴⁴

As the inheritor of local tax-collecting rights, the master of unquantifiable revenues and the executioner of an antediluvian election procedure, the City of London Corporation is often portrayed, particularly in the light of rational local government elsewhere, as the one that got away. While the Municipal Corporations Act (1835) swept away the old borough system elsewhere, it left the City Corporation largely unscathed.⁴⁵ The Metropolitan Police Act (1829), which created a full time police force for the capital, excluded the City, as the government was, in the words of Sir Robert Peel, 'afraid to meddle' within its walls. Similar treatment was accorded the City with later legislation. For example, there was a notable lack of action following the First Reform Act when a Royal Commission sat to consider the City Corporation and the Livery Companies in 1837, and similar inaction after other national legislation: from the Public Health Act (1842) to the recommendations concerning the Corporation after the Royal Commission of 1854 to Foster's Education Act (1870) and to the formation of the London County Council (1889). In each the Corporation emerged as a separate case, a bastion of older values and virtues. Or, according to radical opinion which sought either to destroy the Corporation altogether, or to absorb it into a London-wide body, as a centre for greed and corruption.⁴⁶ This became part of the debate as to whether or not to centralise or de-centralise the capital's administration, with the Corporation becoming the main advocate of the latter view. Despite the best efforts of Liberal reformers such as James Beal and his 'Municipal Reform' Association created in the late 1860s, and the reforming zeal of others like Joseph Firth, Charles Dilke and Sir William Harcourt in Gladstone's 1880-86 governments, the Corporation remained, in the words of the 1962 Royal Commission on London

⁴⁴ Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities. Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989); The contemporary nature of what is now in effect a business vote was discussed in *The Sunday Telegraph Magazine* 30 June 1996. My thanks to Bill Purdue for sending me this article.

⁴⁵ G.B.A.M. Finlayson, 'Politics of Municipal Reform 1835', *English Historical Review*, cccxx1, (1966), pp. 673-692.

⁴⁶ 'New Labour' announced the end of over a century of radical opposition committed to abolishing the Corporation in March 1996, see *The Guardian*, 18 March 1996.

government, an 'obsolete appendix'. This strand of the City's history has been comprehensively dealt with elsewhere, and is in the main, like its analogue in economic history, outside my remit.⁴⁷ It is enough to suggest, however, that the Corporation should not be seen by historians as a superannuated local authority, a 'curious survival', robbed by its fleeing population of anything but symbolic power.⁴⁸ On the contrary it flourished, not just as an authoritative voice representing the financial City but also of a wider constituency in London and beyond.⁴⁹

(iv)

In both economic and local-government history perspectives of the City of London the eight streets leading off from Bank are presumed to be its vital hub or centre. To the artist Niels Moeller Lund (1863-1916) they were represented in his picture as the *Heart of the Empire* (1904).⁵⁰ Looking down at the Mansion House from the Bank of England, and further to St. Paul's Cathedral and the City churches nestling around it, we are invited to consider in the far distance, the environs of London, the Surrey hills, the garden of England and to gaze out to the further colonies. Another way of considering this space, however, might concentrate on its outskirts or periphery: the view from the boundaries of the growing City; a search for a variety of identities rather than a supposed dominant character. The City at the end of the nineteenth century, and well into this century was, after all, as much made up of chop houses, clubs and taverns, churches, chapels, synagogues and Livery Company Halls, as financial palaces and offices. Nevertheless, existing historiography has tended to emphasise the financial City as its true essence. Raised as a 'symbolic heartland' and an

⁴⁷ D. Owen, *The Government of Victorian London 1855-1889: The Metropolitan Board of Works, the Vestries and the City Corporation* (London, 1982); Ken Young, 'The Conservative Strategy for London' *The London Journal*, 1,1, May, (1975), pp.56-81; P. J. Waller, *Town, City, and Nation in England 1850-1914* (Oxford, 1983). esp, pp. 24-68; J. Davis, *Reforming London: the London Government Problem 1855-1900* (Oxford, 1988).

⁴⁸ P. G. Williamson, *Curious Survivals* (London, 1923).

⁴⁹ Michael Cassidy, Chairman of the Corporation's Policy and Resources Committee was called to represent the City on the occasion of the Baring fraud, *Newsnight* 18 July 1995. The Lord Mayor did the same when the I.R.A. exploded a bomb in Bishopsgate and Cassidy reappeared as a modern 'Mr London' - taking over from Herbert Morrison and Ken Livingstone perhaps - when Greenwich was announced as the site of the Millennium celebrations.

⁵⁰ Vivien Knight, *The Works of Art of the Corporation of London - A catalogue of paintings, watercolours, drawings, prints and sculpture* (Cambridge, 1986), p. 162.

'historical inner core', it is a meeting point where the claims of the local and the demands of the global do battle and where a tryst of historical tides have shaped out the 'City of history', as Jane Jacobs's described its post-imperial present. At the present time, informed by past certainties of morality, civility, hierarchy and order but constantly in a state of change, City authorities 'negotiate' the cross currents and rapids of globalisation. Threatened by a proposal to swap Victorian gothic (itself once the object of traditionalist horror) for German modernism, a City planning inquiry held episodically from 1962 for a period of thirty years, used Lund's painting, actually hanging at the rear of room where the deliberations took place, as a blueprint for an ideal City. An imperial City, if not exactly set in stone was preserved on canvas, and this at a time when technological advances in communication have allowed the financial City to find alternative offices at the City's boundaries.⁵¹ Yet this City of history, or more accurately its conceit as a place of antiquity, was at the same time, busy burying its past under rubble and blue plaques. Following the destruction of City churches in the nineteenth century, the Cannon Street Hotel, like the Guildhall Justice Room and the gothic memorial fountain were demolished by the 1970s. In 1985 the entrance of Liverpool Street railway station made way for the Broadgate development; the Corn Exchange was demolished in 1987; the Billingsgate Christian Mission and the cast-iron bridge over Ludgate Hill in 1990 and the subject of the Bank Junction inquiry, the Mappin & Webb building at 1 Poultry, finally yielded in 1994.⁵²

As an illustration of a paradox, of the tension between conservation and modernisation, it was nothing new. It does, however, raise a conceptual problem regarding the nature of space and its relation to time. On the one hand, human geographers have often emphasised space as passive, devoid of politics and in a kind of stasis, standing as an opposite to formalistic historical accounts.

⁵³ History, on the other hand, although enjoying a tentative courtship with spatial analysis, is

⁵¹ Jane M. Jacobs, 'Negotiating the Heart: heritage, development and identity in postimperial London', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 12, (1994), pp. 751-772; Jane M. Jacobs, 'The Battle of Bank Junction: the Contested Iconography of Capital', in Stuart Corbridge, Nigel Thrift and Ron Martin (eds.), *Money, Power and Space* (Oxford, 1994); M. Pryke, 'An International City Going Global: spatial change and office provision in the City of London', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 9, (1991), pp. 197-222. On globalisation and identity see for example, John Bird et al., (eds.) *Mapping the Futures: local cultures, global change* (London, 1993).

⁵² Warren Grynberg, *The Square Mile - The City of London in Historical Postcards* (Moreton-in-Marsh, 1995); Ricky Burdett, *City Changes: Architecture in the City of London, 1985-1995* (London, 1992).

⁵³ Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time' in Michael Keith and Steve Pile (eds.), *Place and the Politics of Identity* (London, 1993), pp. 141-161; Doreen Massey, 'Politics and Space/Time', *New Left Review*, 196, (1992), pp. 65-84.

thought by some historical geographers to be overly positivistic (concerned with facts) and sequential (linking events one after another). It seeks, or so it is argued by its critics, to draw a map of the past which narratives might hope to transport artificially to the present, and which might in turn suggest ways to understand the future. This, it is further argued, creates a model of the modern that demands progenitors and successors, temporal straight lines which in a post-modern sense are either false or unknowable.⁵⁴ Yet those concerned with place and identity often seek historical depth or an understanding of change, but more often preface arguments with histories of an inadequate 'potted' variety.⁵⁵ Thus, when we consider the impact of the eight streets around the Bank of England, we seemingly have to choose between place or landscape analysis or an historicism, usually related to the functional use of this or that institution within the wider economy.

Postmodernism, or at least some of its methods, may help us to understand how the raw materials of personal identity are forged and the more subtle shapes of collective belonging are crafted, and historicism, as ever, will add context. Another way of looking at the City of London, therefore, may suggest that representations of the space at the City's centre that appear passive and consensual should not be viewed uncritically, but instead opened to a scrutiny of how, in point of fact, it has been historically contested. It is one of the intentions of this thesis to encourage the idea, suggested by Doreen Massey, that the study of spatiality and temporality are not necessarily antipathetic, that any account of a particular locality will benefit from ripping open what she calls the 'neat and tidy envelope of space-time'. In the case of the City of London the very topography and landscape simultaneously explains, not only its spacial organisation, but its historical development. But the task before us is to reconceive the streets around the Bank of England in terms that do not simply underline its functional place in the wider economy, dedicated to the exchange of money and commodities. Indeed it will be argued that other influences, not least from the City's civic and

⁵⁴ F. Jameson, 'Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism', *New Left Review*, 146, (1984), pp.53-92; F. Jameson, *Postmodernism. or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (London, 1991); D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: an enquiry into the origin of cultural change* (Oxford, 1989).

⁵⁵ For the relationship between geography and history see L. Guelke, *Historical Understanding in Geography* (Cambridge, 1982); A.R.H. Baker and M.D. Billinge (eds.), *Period and Place: research methods in historical geography* (Cambridge, 1982); William Norton, *Historical Analysis in Geography* (New York, 1984), esp., 'Developments in history and economic history', pp. 1-16; Edward W. Soya, *Postmodern Geographies-The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (London, 1990), esp., 'History, Geography: Modernity', pp. 10-42; Alan R. H. Baker and Gideon Biger (eds.), *Ideology and Landscape in Historical Perspective - Essays on the meaning of some places in the past* (Cambridge, 1992), pp. 230-254.

associational life, created relationships outside of the market, while remaining influenced by it. This is what Massey means by creating a 'conjunction of many histories and many spaces'.⁵⁶ Simply put, the City even by the 1880s with its resident population depleted, was still open to conflict and dispute, even if the space at its centre has been unproblematically portrayed, then and since, as the 'Heart of Empire'.

Theoretically this is a novel approach particularly, as we have seen, City historiography has been associated not with notions of opposing identities, but with rival interests. As these interests were thought to be economically rooted, both Anderson and Rubinstein could arrive at similar conclusions. In related fields, this kind of approach has been replaced - or at least supplemented - by examining the role of shared cultural identities in the perception of class consciousness in the case of Margot Finn, and the place of popular consciousness in that of Patrick Joyce.⁵⁷ As one recent survey of this material argued class, from the perspective of this study middle classness, might be thought of as an 'imagined community', much like any other.⁵⁸ Reconsidering Lund's painting as a typical representation of the imperial City, and bearing in mind that the City has hitherto been seen more in terms of its economic interests than its cultural or political identities, we may begin to uncover why the eight streets of the centre have been understood as they have. Therefore, it is to the City's boundaries or periphery that we will seek a richer interpretation of its competing identities, and to suggest other ways that the City might be represented.

(v)

To the Conservative imagination the City was organic and natural, timeless and precious. 'No human brain could have invented this lumbering, sprawling, medieval, modern, oppressive, mysterious City', Mrs Robert Henrey enthused as she picked her way through the ruins of the war-

⁵⁶ Doreen Massey, 'Places and Their Pasts', *History Workshop Journal*, 39, (1995), pp.182-192.

⁵⁷ Margot C. Finn, *After Chartism. Class and Nation in English Radical Politics, 1848-1874* (Cambridge, 1993); Patrick Joyce, *Democratic Subjects-The self and social in nineteenth century England* (Cambridge, 1994). For a discussion of these problems see David Nicholls, 'The New Liberalism - after Chartism?' *Social History*, 21, 3, (1996), pp.330-342.

⁵⁸ James Thompson, 'After the Fall: Class and Political Language in Britain, 1780-1900', *Historical Journal*, 39, 3, (1996), pp.785-806.

time blitz in 1958.⁵⁹ This thesis will focus on a similar view of the City, a City that was in essence modern, but which was thought of as venerable and independent, tried and tested by the passage of time. The aim will be to conceptually reposition the City as a space not exclusively colonised by capitalists, gentlemanly or otherwise. That the City managed the feat of representing itself simultaneously as both modern and ancient, as will be found in the first chapter, was almost entirely due to its ability to recall a space that had at its heart, not the temples of Mammon, but a moral complex, where face to face contact and neighbourliness were prized above all else. The City, from this angle, was well mannered and honest, its citizens loyal and its government at one with English civil and religious liberties. The reasons for the successful co-habitation of modernisation and conservation was assisted by the Corporation's deliberate and planned policy of carving out a business-led constituency for itself through internal constitutional reform. Although the Corporation was often presented as harmless, if irritating, by its detractors (some of whom could be found within its own ranks as well as the financial City), it nonetheless was representative in many ways - particularly through its members participation in its associational life - of the wider City. Thus the second chapter is concerned with a municipal electoral system that, by 1886, was less active than in the years preceding 1848. Political deliberation had largely been transferred from a popular voting system meeting in the wardmotes to the City's associations, which now as ratepayers not inhabitants, demanded the ownership of property as a condition of participation.

Dissident voices to this fundamental change often originated on the City's periphery. A prominent example is Joshua Toulmin Smith (1816-1869) although, when he stood up in the wardmote of the populous ward of Farringdon Without on the City's boundary and argued for a maintenance of a decentralised localism in its politics, was already seen by some as an anachronism. To the 'romantic' and 'reactionary' Toulmin Smith (as he has been inaccurately labelled) a series of measures connected to local government that swapped ratepayer for inhabitant, enfranchising the former upon an evenly graduated scale, became a grim harbinger of

⁵⁹ Mrs Robert Henrey, *The Virgin of Aldermanbury - Rebirth of the City of London* (London, 1958), p. 74.

ever more centralising measures.⁶⁰ As the spread of Ratepayers' Associations continued apace, permissive legislation by Parliament to enable local action gave way to compulsory Acts from on high, and the old radicalism in the process gave way to Liberalism.⁶¹ They were measures that offended against what Toulmin Smith regarded as the ancient principles of English liberties, prompting him to lead a vocal campaign in the City during the late 1840s and 1850s, in a fruitless attempt to assuage its worst effects.

The consequences of the move to a property-based franchise within the City from 1867, as chapter three will examine, were profound. This constitutional shift, and the division between Toulmin Smith's radicalism and the schism of the Ratepayers' Associations, had been encouraged by what Liberal party opinion thought of as a 'manufacturing of votes': a deliberate effort by the 1870s to recruit potential Conservative voters into the reinvigorated Livery Companies. By this time there were twelve great Livery Companies and sixty-two lesser Companies, with only the formally Liberal Fishmongers and the Tory Goldsmiths remaining active in trade regulation. Most Companies were seen as dining clubs and the administrators of bloated charitable trusts, as well as fulfilling educational and benevolent functions for their members. Both the Corporation and the Companies, responding to outside accusations of corruption and waste, had adopted a very deliberate and vigorous attitude towards self-reform. These reforms included initiatives to promote technical education in the mid-1870s. In this matter, as in others, the Livery Companies acted as a conduit: their influence flowing from the direction of the Corporation, and by the sponsoring of technical and commercial education, running into the City of finance and out towards industry.

There were political tensions apparent in a divided Liberalism, as chapter four will indicate. Where local power and community life was once found in the wards of the City, now both had been transferred to the clubs, associations and, critically, to the Livery Companies of the City. The local Conservative Association proved to be the main beneficiaries of the moribund wardmote system.

⁶⁰ Toulmin Smith was also a staunch opponent of The Sturges Bourne Vestry Act (1818) which introduced a scale of voting according to the size and extent of property. This, he insisted, 'treats materialism as the sole foundation and criteria of human good'. He also opposed Hobhouses' Vestries Act (1831). In this case all those who paid rates were of equal worth, although the property qualification still applied and a vote by secret ballot could be demanded. See James Vernon, *Politics and the People - A study in English political culture, c. 1815-1867* (Cambridge, 1993), pp. 18, 19, n.13.

⁶¹ John Prest, *Liberty and Locality-Parliament, Permissive Legislation, and Ratepayers' Democracies in the Mid-Nineteenth Century* (Oxford, 1990); Keith B. Lucas, *English Local Government Franchise* (Oxford, 1952).

With the departure of a resident constituency, and the dynamic re-structuring of the civic and financial City, an imaginative space opened up in contemporary perceptions of the wider City. It had only been possible, however, because Liberalism in the City had property and constitution engraved on its soul, allowing it to move gradually towards opposing ideas of equality and mass democracy. Whereas in the early part of the period adherents of liberty like Toulmin Smith were concerned with community later, as it will be argued in the fifth chapter, a classical, minimalist economic liberalism, keyed into business, held sway. In large parts of the City, as in the sponsoring of technical education, opinion became in varying degree's interventionist in dealing with the state on matters imperial. Indeed the communion between City business interests, its associational life and the state, would become increasingly close.⁶² By the end of the period a rhetoric of civil and religious liberty and decentralisation, borrowed or half-remembered from an older civic language of community, was employed by City figures in the committee rooms of a host of imperialist and Individualist organisations. It was a process that fed the imperial lion, defended both property and the constitution, and eased the path from Liberalism to Liberal Unionism in 1886, influencing responses to the unemployed crisis of the same year, before finally settling in a position that was trenchantly Conservative.

(vi)

The influence then of those thought to be on the periphery of the City, extended back from the Corporation and Livery Companies to the commercial and financial institutions of the City's centre and were represented in the subject of the last chapter, the Lord Mayor's Show. The object of these representations of the City were the crowds who gathered to watch and a voting public further afield. Older arguments or assumptions about crowds such as those first made by George Rude, Eric Hobsbawm and E P Thompson viewed mass phenomena as frequently riotous, involving action against property and as being, in essence, defensive. The crowd is equated with violence or

⁶² A.C. Howe, 'Free Trade and the City of London, c. 1820-1870', *History*, 77, 251, (1992), pp. 391-410. Howe has persuasively argued that a Protectionist presence in the City was only in decline from mid-century, although most City opinion was favourable to Free Trade. Accordingly, the 'celebration of hegemonic Liberalism' provides at this time, 'the greater evidence of the public power of the state over the City of London than it does evidence of the private power of the City over the state'.

the 'hostile outburst', whether or not it is found as collective behaviour in formalised institutions and movements or is sought from 'below'.⁶³ In some of its derivative work, social control is thought to have been exercised by the agencies of the bourgeois state through the medium of, say, the police or poor law, as well as through a capitalist ideology, hegemony or moral regulation that permeated everything.⁶⁴ The working class, dismayed by the industrial and political defeats in the revolutionary moment of the 1840s, often displayed 'false consciousness', meekly exercising self-constraint, while seeking accommodation within the political nation.⁶⁵ Taking their cue from earlier psychologists of crowd behaviour,⁶⁶ the pioneers of studies of the crowd in history, although succeeding in re-constructing the 'people' or the 'rabble' as rational and thus rescuing them as an abstraction, neglected consideration of the crowd gathered for sporting or religious occasions, or reasons of public spectacle.⁶⁷ These events were seen, in keeping with the post-1851 'age of equipoise', as inherently conservative or consensual. Thus, it has been argued that 'consensual' events such as the Lord Mayor's Show grew with the ability of the state to control them, and with the increasingly conservative working classes' willingness to absorb its messages. Similar assumptions of a manipulated citizenry during the last years of the nineteenth century have also been made by Jurgen Habermas. The concern here was for participatory rather than representative democracy, largely located in the golden window of the eighteenth and early

⁶³ This section is derived from a fine and intelligent criticism of these views by Mark Harrison, *Crowds and History. Mass Phenomena in English Towns, 1790-1835* (Cambridge, 1988).

⁶⁴ David Goodway, *London Chartism* (London, 1982); Philip Corrigan and Derek Sayer, *The Great Arch: English State Formation as Cultural Revolution* (Oxford, 1985).

⁶⁵ George Rude, *The Crowd in History 1730- 1848* (London, 1981); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: studies in archaic forms of social movement in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries* (London, 1959); E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century', *Past and Present*, 50, (1971) pp. 76-136; E. P. Thompson, 'The Moral Economy Reviewed' in E. P. Thompson, *Customs in Common* (London, 1991), pp. 259-352. A. P. Donajrodzki (ed.), *Social Control in Nineteenth Century Britain* (London, 1977); This dominant historiography was opposed by both Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Class Expression versus Social Control? A Critique of Recent Trends in the Social History of 'leisure', *History Workshop*, iv, (1978), pp. 162-170 and F. M. L. Thompson, 'Social Control in Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, xxxiv, 2, May (1981), pp.189-208.

⁶⁶ Gustave Le Bon, *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind* trans. by Robert K Merton (Hermondsworth, 1977); Robert A. Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology - Gustave Le Bon and the crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic* (London, 1975), esp., 'Collective Psychology in the 'Era of Crowds', pp. 59-83; Susanna Barrows, *Distorting Mirrors: Visions of the Crowd in Late Nineteenth Century France* (London, 1981); Juap Van Ginneken, *Crowds, Psychology and Politics 1871-1899* (Cambridge, 1992).

⁶⁷ Robert J. Holton, 'The Crowd in History: Some Problems of Theory and Method', *Social History*, 3, 2, (1978), pp. 219-233.

nineteenth centuries.⁶⁸ The nature of communication or the so-called manipulation of public opinion, in the later period at least, was confined to language rather than the representation of ceremony or pageant, what Roger Chartier has called the 'cornerstone of cultural history'.⁶⁹ The emphasis was, as Habermas argued, on conversation, reason, public opinion, a world of letters, critical readers and 'plain speech'. For, as one commentator reminds us, Habermas preferred discourse to aesthetic representation.⁷⁰

To Habermas the public sphere was a space in which both property owner (bourgeois) and human being 'pure and simple' (homme), could, as he put it, 'engage' with the state.⁷¹ Likewise in the coffee houses, literary taverns and saloons of London, debate, like Toulmin Smith's archetype of the City's wardmotes and inquest committees, was accessible, free and unsullied by sectional interests. Unlike the analysis of the historians of the crowd this was a sphere considered to be separate from economic interests. Indeed, its intention was to focus on the exchange, not of goods, services and labour, but of ideas. Taken together, both the historians of the crowd and the theory of Habermas consign the late nineteenth century as a time either of consensus or staged public representation. If these models over-simplify - those lining London's cold November streets to watch the Lord Mayor's Show most certainly did not swallow all that was presented to them - it could indeed be seen as a moment when culture was not so much lived as consumed. As Toulmin Smith predicted, once the duties and rights of citizenship were removed, associational life would

⁶⁸ Q. Skinner, 'Habermas's Reformation', *New York Review of Books*, 29, 15, (1982), pp.35-8.

⁶⁹ Roger Chartier, *Cultural History. Between Practices and Representations* Trans. by Lydia G. Cochrane (Cambridge, 1988).

⁷⁰ John Durham Peters, 'Distrust of Representation: Habermas on the Public Sphere' *Media, Culture and Society*, 15, (1993), p. 562. Habermas, in his latest works has added 'aesthetic rationality' to the 'ideal speech situation' as worthy of study. He has also, while still persisting in notions of 'manipulation' and 'social control', now admits 'the potential of mass culture for spawning political resistance and social change'.

⁷¹ It is from the feminist viewpoint that Habermas's model has been most heavily criticised. See Carole Pateman, 'Feminist Critiques of the Public/Private Dichotomy' in S.I. Benn and G.F. Gaus (eds.) *Public and Private in Social Life* (New York, 1983), pp. 281-303; Nancy Fraser, 'What's So Critical About Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender' *New German Critique*, 35, (1985), pp. 97-131. Interestingly, the *Reports from Commissioners: Municipal Corporations (England and Wales) 31 January - 17 July 1837*, xxv (1837) insinuated that many women were active in the Companies. *The Times*, 7 November 1834, reported that there were 'many females free of the Company'.

become polluted by the corrupting influences of commercialisation, advertising, political parties and their predatory bureaucracies.⁷²

These accounts, however, assume that representations were a simple reflection of social reality.⁷³ Several years ago Stedman Jones in a pioneering work, not only threw grave doubt on the notion that social reality only had be transmitted from above for it to become a shared experience, but suggested instead that language could be placed between the real and representational, enjoying an anterior existence.⁷⁴ In doing this he also argued against the structuralist marxist position that maintained that thought was determined by social being, itself derived from material or 'base' economic relationships. Exploring the interaction between experience, consciousness and language, commentators such as Joyce and Vernon have argued something quite different. Seeking instead to blur the distinction between reality and how it is represented, not only does language prefigure social reality, they have insisted, but that it can only be understood through the cultural prism of the reader. The question is not so much what was true, but which truth or narrative should predominate.⁷⁵ The use of the 'linguistic turn' (it has been argued in Stedman Jones' latest intervention against this position) has claimed some its features from its post-structuralist parent. Ideas of manipulation, also derived it would seem from an older marxism, predominate and official political ceremonies similarly are, in themselves, deemed to 'transform and reconstitute' political reality.⁷⁶ Yet if historical materialism is dead, the use of Foucault, derived from Althusser, has kept alive ideas of social causation, and marxist assumptions regarding ideology, power and the state. The resurrection, in fact, of a 'Determinist Fix'.⁷⁷

⁷² This seems to be the view of Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England. Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford, 1990).

⁷³ See, for example, David Chaney, 'A Symbolic Mirror of Ourselves: Civic Ritual in Mass Society' *Media, Culture and Society*, 5, (1983), pp. 119-135.

⁷⁴ Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class - Studies in English Working Class History 1832-1982* (Cambridge, 1983).

⁷⁵ Patrick Joyce, 'The End of Social History?', *Social History*, 20, 1, (1995), pp. 73-91.

⁷⁶ James Vernon, *'Politics and the People'*, p.49.

⁷⁷ Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The Determinist Fix: Some Obstacles to the Further Development of the Linguistic Approach to History in the 1990s' *History Workshop Journal*, 42, (1996), pp.19-35; The tendency to artificially conflate the work of Joyce and Stedman Jones, seems almost wilful. See, for example, Neville Kirk, 'History, Language, Ideas and Post-Modernism' *Social History*, 19, 2, (1994), pp. 221-240.

For a study of the City, particularly one such as this interested to delve into the relationship between spatial analysis and history, the importance of individual and collective identities as well as economic interests, this post-modernist excursion may have, ontologically, brought benefits. First, its use of visual sources opens up terrain for the historian to explore, and is of certain value in any reappraisal of the role of the crowd. No doubt language, speech, and the printed word have for long dominated over other expressive forms of communication:- of pageant, art, and theatre and, for our purposes, civic ceremony. Second, although the 'constitutional idiom', Epstein's phrase, may or may not prove to be the 'master narrative' of the nineteenth century, the idea of a disenchantment with representative politics throughout the period chimes with some of the conclusions of this study (and bares some relation to the argument of Habermas). ⁷⁸ A pedagogic benefit of seeing these approaches as a 'wonderful tool', rather than of deeper epistemological worth, might be the liberation of history from a positivistic fetish for facts and their accumulation, a pre-occupation of the economic historian. ⁷⁹ To employ post-modernist methodology then, to engage with a more garbled range of sources, would mean that the economistic rationality of the gentlemanly capitalism variety may become a 'discursive field' and not just a series of measurable quantities, profit balanced with loss, imports with exports and so forth. In sum, we might account for what is left of the City when economic historians have computed their calculations and to think afresh about how space has been represented at the City's centre: to consider, in addition, how this bears relation to the way we think about the City now. To put it more precisely, to what extent do representations of the City's past determine its dominant character and far might they be thought of politically? The point, as Dror Wahrman argues, is to locate politics in the 'space of possibilities' between social reality and how it was represented. That 'one possible understanding wins ground over another', and that it 'has a logic and a dynamic of its own', are crucial here. ⁸⁰ Narratives may be contrasted one to another, visions and perceptions of the City juxtaposed, but what really matters is to chart the

⁷⁸ 'Far from representing a triumphant march towards the model parliamentary democracy, nineteenth century politics witnessed the gradual closure of the public political sphere' James Vernon, 'Politics and the People' p. 160; James A. Epstein, *Radical Expression - Political Language, Ritual, and Symbol in England, 1790-1850* (Oxford, 1994).

⁷⁹ Raphael Samuel, 'Reading the Signs', *History Workshop Journal*, 32, (1991), pp. 88-109; Raphael Samuel, 'Reading the Signs 11. Fact-grubbers and mind-readers' *History Workshop Journal*, 33, (1992), pp. 220-251.

⁸⁰ Dror Wahrman, *Imagining the Middle Class - The Political Representation of Class in Britain, c. 1780-1840* (Cambridge, 1995), p. 8. See also Dror Wahrman, 'The New Political History - A Review Essay' *Social History*, 21, 3, (1996).

changing battle between contemporaries in an arena where agency and contingency are at work. In short, its methodology may be post-modernist in form, but it is a return to a knowledge based history - 'hybrid' political and cultural history perhaps - but history nonetheless.⁸¹ Thus, we might conclude, it was in the practice of politics - the varying way that it represented the centre of the City - which made it a contested space, becoming at once modern and conservative. Modern in its identification with the great institutions of the eight streets, conservative in wishing to preserve monuments to a City of antiquity. Perhaps a last look at Lund's painting would persuade us to note the financial area beneath us, to acknowledge the far distance of Empire, but to linger in the middle distance of the City's outskirts. For, as will be seen in the forthcoming chapters, it was here that the City of London's Conservatism was to be found.

⁸¹ Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Past and Present in Contemporary Culture* (London, 1994).

Chapter One

Ghosts in the City: The City of London as a Moral Community ¹

Temples of Mammon are voiceless again -
Lonely policeman inherit Park Lane
Silent in Lothbury - quiet Cornhill-
Babel of Commerce, thine echoes still.

Far to the South - where the wanderer strays
Lost among graveyards and riverward ways,
Hardly a footfall and hardly a breath
Comes to dispute Laurence-Pountney with Death. ²

This first chapter has a simple purpose. By turning an enquiring beam on the darker and formerly unseen corners of the square mile, it is hoped that the City will be bathed in a light that will reveal another, less familiar, mental picture of its centre and environs. This opening account seeks to establish the City of London as a bustling, thriving locale; its citizens working and living not so much in the shadow of an immense Prometheus striding forward inextricably toward modernity, but within a socio-economic community. Away from the centre of the City, from the streets around the Bank, we will discover an alternative City to the one usually presented:- a City of apparent survivals such as the Livery Company Halls, the heterogeneous places of worship, and a vibrant civil society of clubs and associations, all anxious to safeguard at least the memory of what was to become after the 1870s, a disappearing population. The City as a whole, therefore, stands as an historical paradox. From one perspective there is the familiar idea of it as modern, boasting the cathedrals of high finance, yet from another perspective we will discover a seemingly backward-looking collection of relics hitherto banished to its outskirts.

¹ A version of this chapter was presented at the Social History seminar at King's College, Cambridge, 15 May 1996.

² Henry S. Leigh, *A Cockney's Evening Song*, also written as *An Evening Song* (1869) in Wilfred Whitten, *London in Song* (London, 1898), p. 316.

At the time of the Chartist vigilance in 1848 the streets of the City were narrow and 'teeming', its population, both in number and density, was high and improvements were still equated with progress.³ In contrast to a wider London that was often dark and muddy, gas lighting in the City had arrived by at least 1820, and although wood blocks made up the pavement by 1839, this material would soon be replaced by cast iron in 1862, granite and asphalt in 1869 and asphalt on concrete by 1890. In addition to street lighting and paving, the New River Company completed the installation of mains sewage in 1864. The telegraph introduced near the Bank in 1837 was used in the re-built General Post Office in 1873, having already linked the six stations of the City's police force by 1861. The first telephone exchange in the country was opened in the City by the Telephone Co. Ltd in Coleman Street in 1879.⁴ Electricity became a common feature, promising, it was fancied, both to illuminate a wondrous City and, more remarkably yet, to banish darkness forever.⁵ One denizen of the City recorded as early as March 1863 how effective the Monument looked in the glow of this artificial light.⁶ Serious experiments at the Mansion House and Royal Exchange began in May 1878, before spreading throughout the City under the auspices of the City of London Electric Company in the years after 1886.

(i)

By 1886 the City's resident population had declined gently, then sharply, in each decennial year after 1851. (Appendix One, Table Two) There is no doubt that the last half of the nineteenth century saw a fundamental structural change in the City of London. The questions are, however, how far did the economic rhythm of market forces dictate the extent and pace of change? How far too did the politically conscious behaviour of those charged with City affairs - particularly those in the City of London Corporation - impinge on what historians and urban theorists have often posited as a natural and irreversible process? A clue to answer these questions might be found in the timing

³ James Winter, *London's Teeming Streets, 1830-1914* (London, 1993).

⁴ C.H. Holden and W.G. Holford, *The City of London - A Record of Destruction and Survivals* (London, 1951).

⁵ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Disenchanted Light: The Industrialisation of Light in the Nineteenth Century*, Trans. by Angela Davies (Berkeley, 1988).

⁶ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 19,019, *Diary written by T. Rodgers 1834-1898, 10 March 1863*.

and pace of de-population. Karl Gustar Grytzell discussing the population changes in the County of London in the nineteenth century, identifies a stable population in the London City District before 1851, but one that is declining from the centre after that. Between 1861 and 1871 the decrease in population of the City varied between a drop of 26.6 % in the St. Bride area, and a dip of 40.1% in Castle Baynard. During the period 1871 to 1881, the highest decrease is again to be found within the City, with Cripplegate on the outskirts registering a 47.3% decline. The highest percentage decrease within a wider London between 1881 and 1891 is still within London City with 40.3%. In 1891 centrally placed Broad Street recorded the largest decrease, with the wards on the City's borders having taken the prize in the preceding decade.⁷ Nonetheless if we compare the central wards of the City, Broad Street, Coleman Street and Cornhill, with the outer wards, Cripplegate Without, Farringdon Without, Castle Baynard, Queenhithe, Vintry, Dowgate, Bridge Within, Billingsgate, Tower, Aldgate, Portsoken and Bishopsgate Without, we find that the population decrease was not always sudden or continuous. Even if St. Stephen's, Coleman Street, for example, conforms to the expected trend of a steady and continuous decline, other areas such as St. Mary Woolchurch, also centrally placed in Broad Street and Cheap wards, declined in population gradually until 1871, fell dramatically until 1881, but then rose steeply in the decade to 1891 (Figure Two). St. Lawrence Jewry also fell steadily, but then revived between 1881 and 1891 (Figure Three). This ebb and flow of population can be found in the outer areas too. While the population of St. Bartholomew-the-Less in the ward of Farringdon Without rises until 1861, falls in the decade to 1871, it rises in 1881 and rises again in 1891 (Figure Four). Indeed there were more people living here by the end of the period, than at the beginning.

⁷ Karl Guntar Grytzell, *County of London - Population Changes 1801-1901* (Lund, 1969), p. 87.

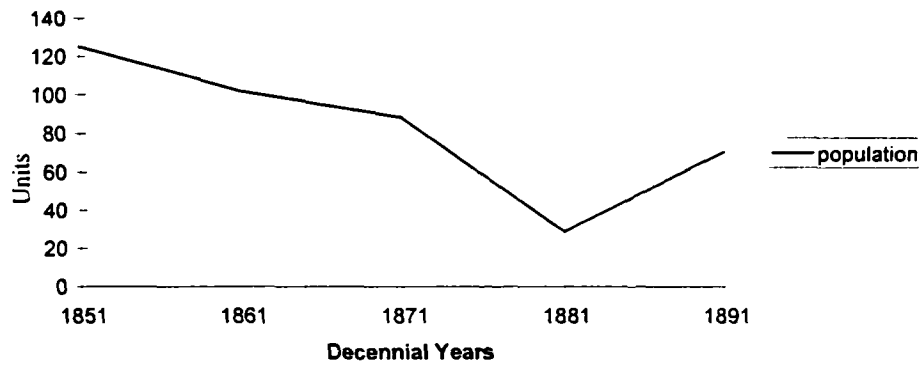


Figure Two: Population of St. Mary Woolchurch, Broad Street and Cheap Wards

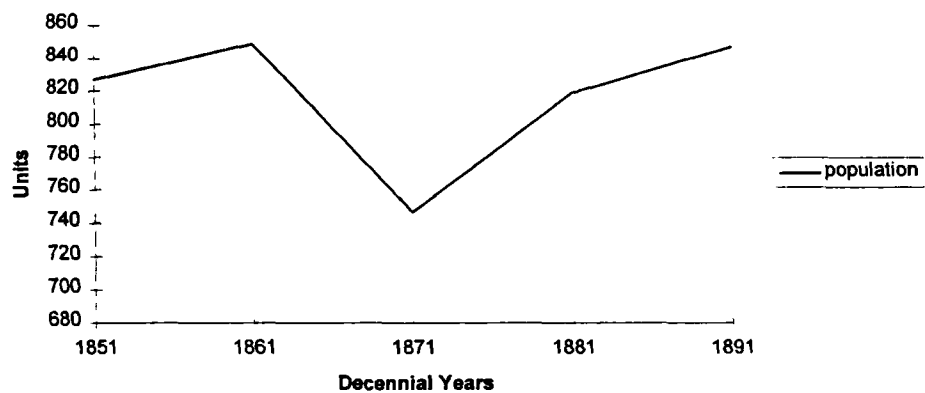


Figure Three: Population of St. Lawrence Jewry, Cheap Ward

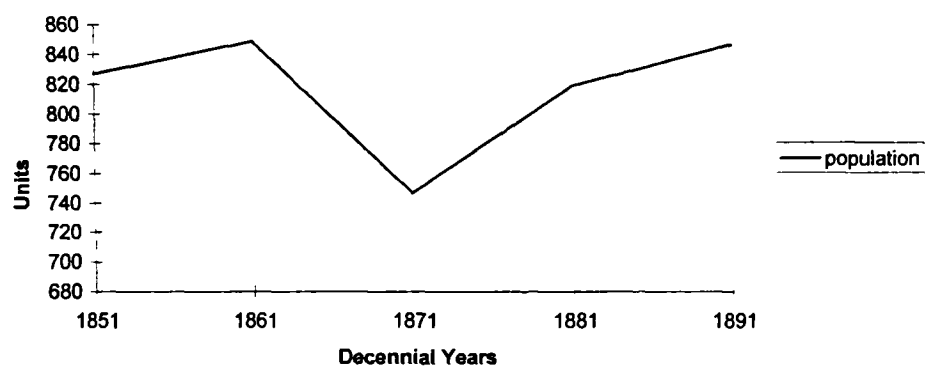


Figure Four: Population of St. Bartholomew-the-Less, Farringdon Without Ward

Other areas within the populous Farringdon Without ward continued to retain a large and relatively constant level of population during the period. Taken as a whole over the course of the century the

decrease is absolute, but a relative comparison of the decline within the City during the period is instructive, particularly as it suggests that the pattern of demographic displacement does not readily conform to theoretical models.⁸ The population did not haemorrhage from the middle, or leak from the edges. In fact from within many of the discrete areas that made up the City, people slipped in and out, or 'flitted' to use a contemporary term. In any case, if Grytzell paints a picture of decline from the centre, and a sharp, absolute decline from 1851, the precise timing is contested. Dr Richard Roberts has argued for a building explosion in the 1850s that pushed the populace outwards.⁹ Others, such as Dr John Summerson, have argued that: 'The biggest drop, representing something like a mass migration from City streets to west-end suburbs was in the sixties and early seventies, which was also the period of the most spectacular and innovative new non-residential buildings'.¹⁰ Intrinsic to these viewpoints is the shared assumption that higher densities of population did not move eastwards until the 1890s, and this is largely confirmed by contemporaneous accounts.

(ii)

The real threats in 1848 were less those of Chartism than of disease, (particularly cholera), overcrowding and criminality. Looking back to his apprenticeship in Ivy Lane, Newgate Street, during the early part of the century, 'Aleph', a regular contributor to the *City Press*, remembered that

⁸ Even if the notion of the urban as a cultural form lacks dimension, the city as an ecological community seems to have survived in many accounts. Here, the Chicago School of Park, Burgess and Mckenzie seem to hold sway. Influenced by Herbert Spencer's ideas of competition for survival, and Comte's notion of balance or consensus and common purpose, the ecological approach found its starting point with communities (biotic) rather than societies (cultural). This element of social Darwinism conceives the struggle for the 'web of life', or organic interdependence, as one of tooth and claw competition. It is this way that the urban is conceived as both a territorial and functional unit. The competition then is for space alone. The mechanism for the domination of one interest or group over another, is the market: a mechanism that, although unplanned, is orderly and 'balanced'. This is a balance or equilibrium that is then maintained until the development of some fresh element - such as a technical innovation - is introduced. This cycle of invasion and succession is regulated by land values. A price structure that promotes a competition for desirable sites, which in turn forces out the economically weak (residents) making room for the economically strong (business). By this 'natural' process individuals are said to be reallocated by residence and occupation.

⁹ Richard Roberts, *Foreign Banker's of the City of London 1850-1890*. This was a paper given at the *Institute of Historical Research*, 29 April 1994.

¹⁰ John Summerson, *The Victorian Rebuilding of the City of London*, p. 164.

the street was 'on killing day's running with blood' and 'reeking [of] carcasses'.¹¹ The 'Health of London Association', with two Alderman as vice-presidents, reported the results of a questionnaire sent out to clergymen regarding the health of the City. A ratio of 2:1 mentioned that 'offensive trades' were carried out in their locality. The slaughter houses in Aldgate High Street were singled out, along with tallow and whalebone boiling in Paternoster Row, Aldersgate Street, Barbican and elsewhere. Similarly 30% replied in the affirmative when they were asked whether noxious chemical works were carried out in their neighbourhood.¹² At mid-century the City was host to at least thirty cowsheds, many more pig-sties, 138 surface slaughterhouses and sixty-six housed underground. Despite being relatively advanced in sanitary matters, (the majority of pipes having been laid by the time the Corporation acquired the services of Sir John Simon in 1848 as Chief Medical Officer), the mortality rate in the City was in excess of the national average. Population density in 1851 averaged 180 per acre, 131 in the centre, and 291 in the poorer Eastern and Western areas such as Farringdon, Cripplegate, Holborn, Aldgate and Bishopsgate.¹³

In Bishopsgate, William Rodgers was appointed rector of St. Botolph in 1863 and, as an active Liberal, described the human tragedy behind the statistics of the most insanitary, dilapidated and immoral neighbourhood he had ever known. Merchants who had previously lived over their counting houses had removed to desirable suburban neighbourhoods. Replacing the weavers, metal founders and leather-dressers was an enormous wool warehouse. Also in their stead were 'boot-translators', 'slop-tailors', 'office-cleaners', 'costermongers', and 'street-sellers' ('men who trade in baked potatoes in winter and 'hokey-pokey' - a mysterious compound in summer'). These plus 'an indescribable lot who prefer to do odd jobs', were largely hidden off the courts and alleys of the grander thoroughfare of Bishopsgate Street, where much of the City's business was carried on. Rodgers thought many of his parishioners, whether Irish Catholic, Jewish, or Quaker, in addition to Anglicans and other Dissenters, needed a whole staff of sanitary inspectors to attend to their needs.

¹¹ 'Aleph', *London Scenes and London People* (London, 1863) p. 236. 'Aleph', or William Harvey, was either a surgeon or a lawyer from Islington. His 700 articles on City history and antiquarian recollections, 'City Scraps', were well known to readers of the *City Press* over a period of thirteen years. He had been apprenticed in his youth to a silk merchant at 20 Ivy Lane, Newgate Street, although his memory went back to 1805. He died aged 77, at Lonsdale Square, Islington.

¹² (CLRO) *Report of the Health of London Association on the Sanitary Condition of the Metropolis (1846)*.

¹³ Royston Lambert, *Sir John Simon, 1816-1904, and English Social Administration* (London, 1963) p.86.

Much better, he thought, to allow the railways or roads to clear a path through the rookeries and press for the construction of respectable artisans buildings, particularly as vacant rooms in Bishopsgate were, even in bad condition, taken within an hour and rents 30% higher than in Whitechapel or Shoreditch.¹⁴

Within the City walls, overcrowding was thought to be the handmaiden of criminality (Appendix One, Table Three). The local newspaper of the City put it this way:

Poor men and poor families are now completely excluded from open occupation of respectable tenements as the City of London Improvements have swept away their former homes, and they find shelter by stealth, as if the requirement of lodging were a criminal nature. The changes that have taken place in the widening of streets and the rebuilding of whole districts have tended to render the labouring population of the City utterly helpless. They have been driven into holes and corners, to hide themselves in narrow lanes and courts and alleys, and at last, having divided houses into floors, they have come to divide rooms; and in this state of compression they are as busy all night in breeding fever as they are all day in contributing by their labour to the wealth of the City.¹⁵

The City of London Poor Law Union met to discuss these topics in October 1866, and reported that in Three Horning Court, in the parish of St. Katherine Cree, they had found an average of five to nine people per room. In fact in 1851 (as Tables Two and Three in Appendix One indicate) City wide the figure stood at 8.54 per dwelling, it was 8.4 in 1861, 8.08 in 1871, 8.15 in 1881, and by 1891 it had dropped a little to 7.049 (Figure Five).

¹⁴ R.H. Haddon, *Reminiscences of William Rodgers Rector of St. Botolph Bishopsgate* (London, 1888).

¹⁵ *City Press*, December 1862. The City Chamberlain denied charges of poverty, overcrowding and criminality, see Benjamin Scott, *Statistical Vindication of the City of London* (London, 1877).

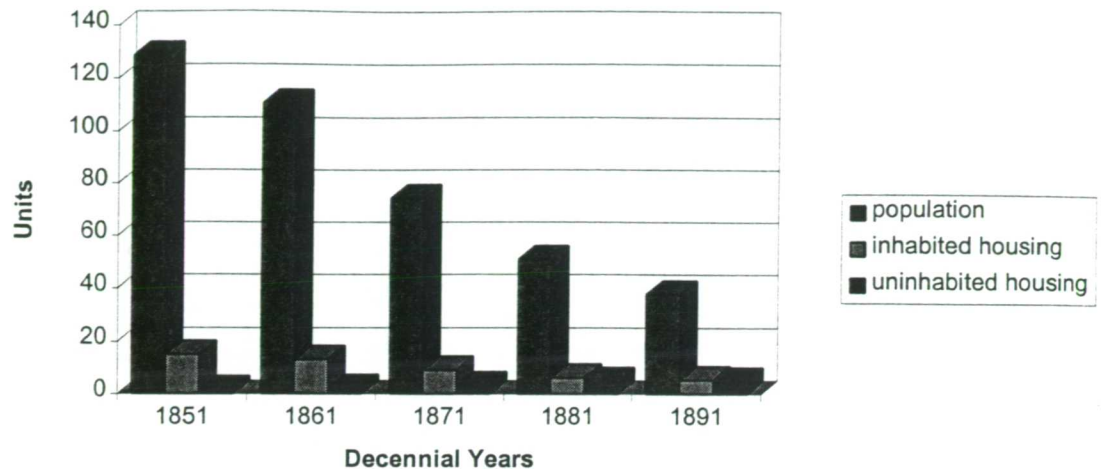


Figure Five: Population and Housing in the City of London

Nevertheless Dr. Letheby, Sir John Simon's successor, was still advising in 1872 that, notwithstanding the great reduction of the population of the City in the previous twenty years, it could not afford to be complacent in its campaign to improve sanitary conditions. Indeed they could not, as later in 1898, Charles Booth not only found 'bitter hostility' in the courts and alleys around St. Sepulchre's, Holborn, but also poverty and poor housing. Even into the next century one observer spoke of the 'crumbling tenements' of Cloth Fair. Here a room was thought to be punitively expensive and although by 1902 it was still overcrowded with factory hands, private manufacturers and women who worked in City offices, the rough, rowdy and criminal had only recently departed.

16

(iii)

Individual members of the City of London Corporation were instrumental in the City's social and political transformation, as were the Corporation itself and the Livery Companies, both of whom

were significant property owners in the City and elsewhere.¹⁷ At mid-century many of the City's representatives were thought of as the 'dirty party', opposing sanitary reform because of their interests in slum rents or building.¹⁸ Yet many others took a direct hand in the transformation of the City, through either their involvement in the railways or more general offshoots of City improvements. For example, the directors of the City Railway Terminus Company, established in 1853, included, alongside an assortment of Common Councilmen as shareholders, members and directors, Alderman Challis (1794-1874) and Alderman Dakin (1808-1889). The Chairman, more interestingly, was Acton S Ayrton, later to be, alongside Firth and Beal, the arch tormentor of the Corporation on the subject of London-wide government. Others were investors in organisations such as the Central Gas Company and the City Offices Co. Limited. The latter, in fact, enjoyed a formidable impact in the construction of purpose-built offices in the streets converging on the Bank, once again under the chairmanship of Alderman Dakin.¹⁹

As investors in the City's physical transformation, following the London City Improvement Act (1847), one would expect the Corporation to have discouraged housing projects within the City - and in some cases they did - but this was not altogether the norm.²⁰ Two examples may illustrate how the City was seen to have faced two ways on this matter. The first was the idea of artisan dwellings proposed by Charles Pearson (1794-1862), the City's Solicitor.²¹ While it was a common plea for housing to be built outside of the City, this scheme maintained a residual concern for the

¹⁷ For example, in 1862 they disposed of 2,000 shares in the Metropolitan Railway Company and in 1868 they purchased the London Coffee House, Ludgate Hill, for £38,500. Unfortunately it has proved impossible to find the extent of their interests, although contemporaries believed them to be substantial. See below, p.91, n.19.

¹⁸ Lambert, *'Sir John Simon'*, p. 88. These included Alderman Wire, Alderman Lawrence, Alderman Sidney, Alderman Moon, Alderman Wilson and Common Councillors Lott, Hicks, and Dixon.

¹⁹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 11,356 Vol. 1 *Central Gas Company*; G.L. (Mans) Ms. 24, 182 Vol. 1 *The City Offices Co. Ltd - Reports of the Annual General Meetings 23 December 1864 to 24 February 1925*.

²⁰ Percy J. Edwards, *History of London Street Improvements, 1855-1891* (Clerk of the Improvements Committee ordered by the Council to be printed, 8th February, 1898).

²¹ Pearson gave evidence of his proposals for suburban living in (P.P), 1846 (719), Vol. xvii, *Report and Minutes of Evidence of Royal Commission on Projects for Establishing Railway Termini within the Metropolis*, pp. 13, 175-7.

labouring poor.²² Objections were only raised by the Corporation when it became clear that they would be residential areas specific to one class, thereby placing workers apart from the moral influence of their social betters.²³ Secondly, in 1862, the year in which the last of the City's workhouses closed, the Court of Common Council acquired land in Victoria Street in order to erect dwellings for the labouring poor and in 1863 Alderman Sir Sydney Waterlow (1822-1906) founded the Improved Industrial Dwellings Company, constructing Langbourne Buildings in Mark Street.²⁴ Permission to erect Corporation Buildings in Farringdon Road, Ray Street and Crawford Passage was given in April the following year. Concrete proposals were made and some executed in the proposals for the improvement of Blewitt's Buildings, Golden Lane, Petticoat Square, and Meeting House Yard. Not all were developed, and by July 1880, tenders on some of these sites had not reached the estimated value of the ground. Hope still remained, however, that a resident population might be tempted back into the City.²⁵ Indeed in 1890 the Corporation lent its support to the 'Inhabited House Duty Repeal Association', opposing legislation that had done so much to worsen the residential housing situation in the City.²⁶

When it was proposed to bring a railway line along the Fleet Valley into a Central Terminus in the Farringdon Road in the early 1850s, the idea of a depopulated City would have been incredible.²⁷ Thus when the plan was finally presented it received the general approval of the City's inhabitants. The citizens of Farringdon Without recognised its social benefits, and praised its financial merits. A petition was sent to the Improvement Committee of the Court of Common

²² (PP) *Royal Commission on Metropolitan Railway Termini* (1846) xvii., Q. 2355. Pearson had been making similar arguments for the migration of the poor since the mid-1840s. Spending some of the radical capital he had accumulated alongside Matthew Wood and others, he had been campaigning as a Common Councilmen since 1833 for improvements to manage what he termed the 'anticipated evil' of a changing and growing City. Certainly, in giving evidence to the railway commissioners, Pearson envisaged the displacement of up to 20,000 people. He also recognised the need for them to be near to their work.

²³ *City Press*, Saturday, 27 September 1862.

²⁴ *City Press*, Saturday, 28 November 1862.

²⁵ In fact, a Lord Mayor was heard to wish aloud for the return of a resident population as late as 1883, see (CLRO) *Extract of Speech Made by the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor at a Dinner of the Improvement Committee of the Corporation of the City of London*, 16 April 1883

²⁶ Philip Snowden, Labour's first Chancellor, was ironically the first to accede to this request in 1924.

²⁷ T.C. Barker and Michael Robbins, *A History of London Transport, The Nineteenth Century*, Vol 1, (London, 1963). Charles Pearson has often been regarded as one of the pioneers of railway travel in London.

Council, suggesting that the proposal, would 'remove many sanitary and social evils of long standing', and would also 'promote a high degree of trade and commerce in the City'.²⁸ The Corporation did not object to the principle of the project, when eventually an acceptable version was presented to them, arguing that it would both increase the value of City property and bring benefits to the wider community.²⁹ However, the Corporation repeatedly failed to lend its support, refusing to mix soft words with hard cash. By October 1864 railways were being opposed by inhabitant and ratepayer alike. The determination to protect the interests of citizens as property owners grew in the following years. For example, the wardmotes of Tower and Farringdon Without wards opposed railway developments in 1868 and 1872, as did Portsoken ward and Bishopsgate ward in the late 1870s. Such opposition to the proposed ventilation of the rookeries of the City by street widenings and railways showed that not all improvements by the 1870s were thought of as uncontroversial or 'progressive'. By this time though, opposition to change was futile, and the City was thereafter emptied of its residential population. Or at least that is how it became to be imagined.

(iv)

So far in this chapter we have set a scene. To the backdrop of a growing central financial district we have begun to sketch a troupe of living, breathing players that together, as residents and City workers', made up a community. Certainly their numbers were in decline, especially those that lived in the City's centre, yet their presence in a variety of ways was a stubborn reminder that the City remained disparate and pluralistic. They had witnessed profound change, and whatever the reception to these changes, they knew them to be thorough and far-reaching, with an estimated four-fifths of the buildings that had existed in 1855 having been rebuilt by 1905.³⁰ These changes, however, and the effect that they might have had on the dominant character of the City, should be treated with caution and placed in context. The Revd. M. Gibbs, a City Rector, on giving evidence of the effects of the accompanying depopulation to a Parliamentary Select Committee in 1873, argued that the popular perception of a City desolate and dehumanised was misleading:

²⁸ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 8826 *Ward of Farringdon Without Common Council Minute Book*, 1 February 1853; G.L. (Mans) Misc. Ms. 276.2 *Letter to the Fleet Valley Improvement Committee from Charles Pearson*, 14 June 1852.

²⁹ (C.L.R.O.) *Common Council Minutes*, 21 February 1861.

³⁰ Holden and Holford, 'The City of London', p.173.

(Mr. Beresford Hope) - The very popular idea that there is no population in the City is a great exaggeration?

(Revd. Gibbs) - In my parish it is

(B.H) Do you not conceive, that as the rich people have gone out of the City, and as the poor people, servants, and so on, have been left, so the night population of the City is a more ignorant population, in proportion, than it might have been formerly?

(G) Whenever a house is vacated now, into which the poor can go, they rush to it and pay very heavy rents; houses in my parish that used to be occupied by the wealthy, are now occupied by a poor family in every room.

(B.H) Is not it the fact that those big warehouses and great buildings which we see in the City, do really shelter a poor population, that is to say, the families of the men that are put in to act as porters in the houses?

(G) There are several houses only inhabited by a porter of that kind.

(B.H) With his wife and children?

(G) Yes

(B.H) Poor people?

(G) Yes

(B.H) Having souls like the rest of the human race?

(G) Yes, and sometimes not allowed to go out on Sundays and leave the places unwatched

(B.H) Then this great growth of wealth in the City, and the dispersion of the merchants to the West-End has really created a poor population in the City?

(G) Yes.³¹

Nonetheless, even with this type of evidence before them, many contemporary sources described a landscape of wastelands, empty houses and streets deserted on the Sabbath, while contrasting it with the growing affluence of the financial institutions at the City's heart. As we have seen, there was undoubtedly not only a continual state of overcrowding and persistent criminality in the City for much of the period, but also a sizeable population. Yet, so many commentators describe its streets as quiet and genteel, as to suggest that the near total depopulation that characterised the City after 1918 - and by the generic term 'The City' contemporaries meant only the central district - was already a fact by the 1870s.

³¹ (PP) *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Select Committee of Union of Benefices Bill*, Friday, 7 March 1873.

Religious activity, however, bears witness to the energy of the remaining community, particularly in the level of chapel and church attendance over the period. Far from vindicating contemporary belief in the City's declining nonconformity, figures of attendance record a total of 14,228 in 1851, that fell to 11,619 in 1886, but then increased to 12,036 in 1902 (Appendix One, Table Four). Even church attendance, while reaching a peak of 28,183 in 1886, fell to 10,561 in 1904, but remained higher than its 1851 figure of 8,079. (Appendix One, Table Five) The spiritual life of the City also remained diverse. Opened in the mid-1870s, the City Temple on Holborn Viaduct was attracting, according to Charles Booth in 1898, 4,000 souls a week under the congregational, moderately Calvinist, if fiercely anti-Socialist rhetoric, of Dr. Parker's preaching. Less prosaic was the growing Jewin Welsh chapel in Aldersgate Street that catered for the large and, so Booth tells us, growing Calvinistic Methodist Welsh community, mostly employed in the City as milk retailers. Like its Welsh counterpart, the Dutch Church in Austin Friars was erroneously considered a 'relic of the past', particularly as it was still attended by a congregation of poor cigar makers from East London plus tailors from Soho and Golden Square.³² Venues such as the Memorial Hall, Farringdon Street (later the birthplace of the Labour party) also drew large crowds, as did the Hall of Science in Old Street, the Milton Conversational Class in Milton Street, the London Ethical Society at the South Place chapel and the teaching of the Comtist, Professor Beesly, at Newton Hall in Fetter Lane. Modernity's shock-troops, Freethinkers, evolutionists, Positivist's and rationalists of every stripe were also filling the Temperance halls off London Wall, continuing a tradition in the City dramatised by the debate between two City resident's, the Chartist and Christian Thomas Cooper, and the atheist Charles Bradlaugh.³³

When Cooper joined Bradlaugh in battle over the ideological remnants of Chartism in the mid-1860s, the level of population as a whole in the City was considered to be relatively steady, although the respondents of the 1851 Religious Census had still complained of missing parishioners. Edward Allfree, rector of St. Swithin's, noted that the houses in his area had been knocked down and had not been replaced. In consequence of this, it would seem, the rector of St.

³² (L.S.E.) B246 *Charles Booth Collection*.

³³ (Bishopsgate Library) *Two Nights' Public Discussion Between Thomas Cooper and Charles Bradlaugh, on the Being of God on the Makers and Moral Governor of the Universe. At the Hall of Science, London Feb. 1st and 3rd..To Which is Added a Plea for Atheism (1864)*; Thomas Okey, *A Basketful of Memories* (London, 1930) esp. chapter v., 'Freethought And Republicanism. In Search of a Faith. Intellectual Vagrancy'.

Olave, Hart Street explained, 'the houses in this parish are held chiefly by persons who reside elsewhere, and are consequently not in London on a Sunday'. The Revd. Povah, rector of St Anne and Agnes, similarly mourned congregations that were now thought to reside in the suburbs.³⁴ But in 1851 this picture of a de-populated City was demonstrably untrue. What was true, however, was that the 'unchurched masses' had been a worry for the establishment for a number of years, and this fact had become muddled with comments regarding the level of the overall population. Declining attendance, it was thought, must suggest a declining community. This tendency continued, as Booth noted later in the century that many churches were ill-attended, although some churches had remained vigorous. St. Nicholas Cole Abbey, for instance, boasted the preaching of the charismatic Canon Shuttleworth, who in any case did not believe in reckoning spiritual influence by the counting of heads.³⁵ Huge attendances from all over London were reported, attracted by this Broad Churchman of, as Booth describes him, 'the extreme type'. Six hundred members of both sexes - clerks, warehousemen, School Board teachers and even a large number of Jews - took advantage of the social facilities that the 'Shuttleworth Club' offered. One of the reasons for its success was its separation of social gatherings from religious services, accommodating activities such as the Mothers Meetings, still popular throughout the City, but whose members quite often never set foot in the church itself. St. Mary-at-Hill too had been transformed by the founder of the Church Army, the Revd. Wilson Carlike. Here participation in more ardent religious devotion promised lodgings or a meal ticket under a system of what he called 'scientific charity', to which the 'criminal and submerged', the 'hungry and homeless', and the respectable but destitute clerk, responded. Many churches adapted to the circumstances of reduced congregations. St. Katherine Coleman opened every morning from 6.30am to 8.45am as a place of refuge for the women and young girls who arrived early with the cheap trains. Allhallows on the Wall did likewise, while special services elsewhere were held for the day-time population, often dedicated to specific interests within the working community:- the City police, the wharfmen, the Billingsgate costermongers, numerous religious bodies and guilds, and the young men who were employed in the wholesale Manchester warehouses. In the same way that the central financial district projected itself outwards as a place of commercial and mercantile importance, this alternative City attracted others inward to

³⁴ (Public Record Office) *The Religious Census of Great Britain, 1851*.

³⁵ The Socialist T. Hancock, because of his revision of the Magnificat, was sent here to contemplate his views.

pray at the altar of antiquity. This is not to suggest that Christians and others gathered in veneration of a belief that was somehow old-fashioned or anti-modern. Rather that the venue for worship, adorned as City churches often were with reminders of the City's past - statues of a famous citizen of the parish here, markers to a famous military victory there - conjured up a context larger than that of simple, pious faith. St. Paul's Cathedral, for instance, while largely deserted in the 1850s for its Sunday services, was packed by the 1890s, becoming a favourite venue for courting couples as well as a focus of protest for the unemployed. While this might point to a religious revival of sorts, it might alternatively suggest that the City, with its ancient churches nestling between its burgeoning financial buildings, had become something of a centre for an effusive Christianity, for those wishing to wallow in patriotism and the national faith, or for others who wished to make a stand against the given order of things.

(v)

If we accept the picture painted so far, of a more varied City than the image handed down to us by contemporaries and historians alike, we may think of it as a politically and socially more heterogeneous place. Considered afresh are the marginal and unimportant: the pedlar wearing the more tatty garb of his social betters and the itinerant trader, selling ice-cream in the summer and chestnuts in the winter, twenty-five a penny in de Fraine's account.³⁶ Cohen the fiddler, who entertained passers-by on the steps of the Exchange until 1861, might still be heard but then only above the noise of passing cattle.³⁷ Thought of as simply eccentric personalities, they have been robbed of their real, if informal, economic functions. Taken in isolation, Peter Stokes, the flying Pieman winging his way down the sheep roadway of Hatton Garden to Fleet Market, or Gentleman Morrison, proprietor and conductor of the Edmonton omnibus that left to Tottenham and Stamford from the Flower Pot Hotel, have little importance. Or those like Charles the curly-headed chief waiter at Langbourn's, near Lombard Street, or John at the Fleece Inn chop-house, frequented by

³⁶ H.G. de Fraine, *Servant of This House - Life in the old Bank of England* (London, 1960), p. 55; In 1886 his father, editor of the establishment newspaper *The Bucks Herald*, had recommended his sixteen year old son for employment to City Conservative politician and former Governor of the Bank, John Gellibrand Hubbard MP.

³⁷ Cohen died in January 1861, and is the probably the unsighted City fiddler described in John Hollingshead, *Ragged London in 1861* (London, 1861), p.26; see esp. 'Clerkenwell and the City Borders', pp.13-38.

the wealthiest from Lloyds or the Stock Exchange, or Robert at the Cock Tavern who was said to have inspired a feature in *Punch*: all remain mere colouring to a more consequential picture. Others, however, impinged directly on the scene. David Evans speaking of *City Men and City Manners* in the wake of the railway mania in 1851 recalls the twilight world of the 'alley-men'. If a broker objected to paying premium prices he would venture into the back street and lanes of the City where 'he agrees perhaps to give him 2d per share for the letter, 2d for signing the deed, and then, by paying the deposit, he can clear the difference between the price outside and the premium inside the House'. Apparently the 'alley-men' were also inclined to resort to petty-bill discounting or bill-stealing. Here, as everywhere in the City, reputation was everything, and in order to compensate for a certain notoriety, it was important to be acknowledged by more prominent businessmen. A nod or a wink would then be converted into confidence for the potential customer, and then into increased business.³⁸ Also relying on reputation and confidence were the ticket porters or 'Trotty Vecks' who made a living by carrying letters and parcels, charging according to distance and licensed by the Corporation, 'a responsible badge in case of default or fraud', although by the 1850s they were taking up more responsible positions in the counting-houses on fixed salaries. Replacing them, and remaining unlicensed, others traversed Lombard Street and the Stock Exchange, undercutting their former rivals. The 'Lombard Street Worthies', as they were called, acted as unofficial guides for those not familiar with a City that, in any case, was always changing shape with a new road here and a vanished landmark there.

Yet the dominant image handed down to us of the City privileges those who had a functional relationship with its financial and banking institutions. The banker and merchant hog the centre stage, and those filling its streets and cleaning its offices wait in the wings. The City vagrant, the disabled poor, match-girls and the impoverished Jewish immigrant have been largely ignored. Nevertheless, contemporaries did record the presence of the 'Creole' or black flower-girl: the legless Irish beggar who travelled on a low wooden-wheeled platform; 'Poor Jenny' who sold her flowers in Newgate Street; the man who offered muffins and crumpets at Hanway Yard; the Jewish women selling puddings in Old Change, or the 'country wenches', 'dapper clerks' and 'unclassed men', the widower, ex-schoolmasters, and men of former 'superior station' that hovered at the doors

³⁸ David M. Evans, *City Men and City Manners. The City; or the Physiology of London Business, With Sketches on 'Change', And at the Coffee House* (London, 1851).

of the workhouse.³⁹ At the doors of the Royal Exchange, however, sat those described by George Augustus Sala in 1859 as 'shabby sedentaries', destitute and 'speechless in the midst of the gabble and turmoil, the commercial howls, and speculative shrieks of high change'. These 'Exchange Spectres' were joined by other casualties of economic downturn, the 'perturbed spirits' in Bartholomew Lane. Both were excluded in financially troubled times from what he called the parliament of money-brokers. As Sala explained they were only resurrected with the economically better times, in which moment:

The MANIA continues, and the spectres arise. They become Stags: But after a storm comes rain; and after a mania, a panic! Then comes a run on the banking-houses; consternation darkens Capel Court; ruin is rampant on 'Change'. And, as I speak, the old Ghosts come creeping back to the old benches, and begin listlessly to wait for the man so punctual in his unpunctuality. The hats are more crammed with papers, the rusty pocket-books more plethoric, the pockets more loaded, the button-holding talks are resumed as earnestly and as lengthily as ever; yet the flesh and blood of staghood have departed, and the figures crouching in Change, and growling about Capel Court, are no longer *men*, but City Spectres.⁴⁰

Sala's spectres were the ruined men, the victims of economic fluctuation and financial collapse. During the 1850s these ghosts were being exorcised. Lord Mayor, Chief Magistrate, and longest serving member of the Stock Exchange, Alderman Sir Robert Walter Carden (1801-1888), confined City vagrants for three weeks at a time in 1857. As a result the streets were said to have been cleared of a nuisance. At a public meeting he promised to find work for all the unemployed present, but subsequently complained that few remained working for more than a month, and only two for a year (Appendix Three). Also faced with intimidation from the authorities, the City's street-vendors held a meeting on 13 December 1860 at the salerooms of Messrs. Keeling & Hunt at Monument Yard to protest against interference in their trade. The result was a petition sent to the Court of Aldermen.⁴¹ As witnesses like de Fraine testified, the shady and the marginal as well as the street

³⁹ These are some of the descriptive terms used by Gustave Doré and Blanchard Jerrold, *A Pilgrimage* (New York, 1970). Originally published in 1872, it was a great favourite with 1970s social historians, it might as easily be read now as a travel guide for the genteel, with one chapter devoted to the University Boat Race.

⁴⁰ George Augustus Sala, *Gaslight and Daylight, with some London Scenes They Shine Upon* (London, 1859).

⁴¹ John Hollinshead, *'Ragged London'*, p. 28.

trader were still a feature of the City streets at the turn of the last century and well into the present one, with amateur boxers employed outside the Bank of England to repel the vagrant, beggar or nomadic pedlar. Similarly, efforts were also made by the Corporation to exclude both the tramway and the betting office from the square mile. Despite this, the central part of the City was still a pluralistic space, as much home to the victims of the City's transformation as to the successful merchant and banker.

Members of the City Corporation also participated in the bustling world of petty trade. Alderman Samuel Birch's' pastry-cook shop was at 15 Cornhill, and was famous for its mutton pies and turtle soup (de Fraine witnessed the turtles delivered live and flapping). 'Mr Pattyman' was Birch's nickname throughout the City until the business (subsequently owned by Ring and Ryman) was closed and the building demolished in 1926, with the green and red shop front finding a resting place in the Victoria and Albert Museum.⁴² Common Councillor Bannister's butcher shop moved to Cheapside in 1861 and to Newgate Street ten years later, like Lemann's biscuit shop making way for the Scottish Amicable Life Office. Print-shop owner and courtier, Alderman Sir Francis Graham Moon's (1796-1871) luck and audacity was often remembered in the City as he had purchased several shops in the 1820s on the corner of Finch Street and Threadneedle Street from an Oxford college, before he sold them in order that the prestigious Exchange Buildings might be built. Around the inner-core were City churches like Allhallows's, Lombard Street, where Common Councillor Ebenezer Howard, a namesake if not a relation of the City-born utopian urban planner, was churchwarden and Alderman Sir William Cubitt (1791-1863), another leading light and where they were still, like other members of City churches, beating the parish bounds in the 1870s and 1880s.⁴³ Further along Lombard Street was where Alderman Wilkins (-1922) went to school, and where Alderman Sir Sydney Waterlow (1822-1906) was requested in 1863 by nearly every banker to be their local representative. Nearby was located Alderman Sir Joseph Dimsdale's (1849-1912) bank, at 49 Cornhill, where he was born and above which he spent his boyhood before going to Eton. Other City politicians like Alderman John Joseph Mechi (1802-1880), owner of the 'Magic Razor' shop in Leadenhall Street, combined trading careers with notable banking, insurance, mercantile

⁴² It now takes pride of place next to the Lord Mayor's coach at the London Museum, although its colour has changed.

⁴³ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 18,488 *Churchwardens Memorandum Book - Parish of Allhallows, Lombard Street, 1871-73.*

and industrial interests, one of many members of the City Corporation to do so during the period (Appendix Three).

The cross-fertilisation of City interests and identities can be further illustrated by the example, of Edward Moxhay, a baker and biscuit maker of Threadneedle Street who erected in the 1840s the ill-fated Hall of Commerce at the massive cost of £70,000. Here, meeting perhaps twice a week, those who could not afford a seat at the Stock Exchange proper offered previously unsaleable shares to other dealers down on their luck. Designed to rival the Stock Exchange, it combined a reading room and office accommodation for the subscriber at five guineas and eventually £1 10s. 6d annually, and a small box, drawer or cupboard for those at the lower end of the scale, the 3/4 or 7/8s stockbroker and jobber.⁴⁴ One of the things that obscures our vision of this period is an image of the stockbroker as the occupant of a mock-Tudor mansion in the Surrey Hills. The 3/4 stockbroker, in this period, could in fact be one step from the marginal world of the casual worker - as Moxhay found to his cost when the Hall of Commerce, always chronically insecure and known as the 'Refuge of the Destitute', was finally demolished in 1870.⁴⁵ Similarly, business was quite often transacted on the streets and in the taverns. 'Aleph', on his return from the Old Auction Mart, Bartholomew Lane witnessed a 'mock auction' in the street next to the Mansion House, 'under the very nose of the Lord Mayor', where shoddy goods were sold to the vulnerable and unwary, the 'country bumpkin' and 'loitering clerk'.⁴⁶ The Jews transacted their business in St. James's Tavern, Duke Street and held a market or exchange in new and second-hand jewellery. Here honesty and straight dealing were thought to be the watchwords. Indeed honesty was a leitmotif of the wider City, with one foreign visitor in 1856 recording astonishment at the lack of sentries or troops posted outside the Bank of England, the open doors and free access to banks and offices, the low tables in the counting houses without grating or metal trellises, and the use of small shovels to weigh gold as if it were salt or cloves.⁴⁷ We must note too, the continuing

⁴⁴ Edward Callow, *Old London Taverns - Historical, Descriptive and Reminiscent, with Some Account of the Coffee Houses, Clubs, etc* (London, 1899), p.20.

⁴⁵ Harold P. Clunn, *The Face of London - The Record of a Century: Changes and Development* (London, 1931), p.29.

⁴⁶ 'Aleph', *'London Scenes'*, pp. 94-95.

⁴⁷ Francis Wey, *Les Anglais Chez Eux*, quoted in Francesca M. Wilson, *Strange Island - Britain Through Foreign Eyes 1395-1940* (London, 1955), p. 215.

presence of retailers and small producers.⁴⁸ Many household names made the City a home, the Singer Sewing Machine Company at 147 Cheapside, Kegan Paul the publishers at 1 Paternoster Square, Colman mustard of Cannon Street and Norfolk, Chubb locksmiths located in Queen Victoria Street (two members of this family, like the Colman's, were Common Councillors) as well as Pickford's removals in Wood Street that became known because of its busy success as 'Pickford's Street'. The 'heart' of the City, to take up a favourite physiological metaphor of the time, brought lifeblood to the economy and, by the end of our period was the pulse of the nation, but it was fed through the arteries of what might be termed an alternative City.

(vi)

This other City did not boast a modern appearance. Indeed, it was essentially sentimental and backward looking, less a thrusting City of finance and sharp deals as a City of imagined survivals, antique churches and Livery Company Halls. One earlier visitor to this City, in 1849, was the American novelist Herman Melville, book hunting and dropping in on some of the City's historic churches. Having been underwhelmed at the 'most bloated pomp' of the Lord Mayor's Show the previous day, he found himself following, as he put it, Dr Johnson's ghost through the City:

I asked an officer of the Fire Department where lay St. Swithin's. He was very civil and polite and offered to show me the way in person. 'Perhaps you would like to see the way to the house where Whittington was born? Many Londoners never saw it'. 'Lead on', said I - and on we went - through squalid lanes, alleys and closes, till we got to a dirty blind lane; and here it was, with a slab inserted in the wall. Thence, through the influence of the Fire Officer, I pushed my way through cellars and anti-lanes into the rear of Guildhall, with a crowd of beggars who were going to receive the brokers meats and pies from yesterday's grand banquet. Within the hall, the scene was comical. Under the flaming banners and devices, were old brokers tables set out with heaps of fowls, hams etc. etc.; pastry in profusion - cut in all directions - I could tell who had cut into this duck, or that goose...⁴⁹

⁴⁸ David Kynaston, 'A Changing Workspace: The City of London since the 1840s' *London Journal*, 13, 2, (1987/8), p. 101.

⁴⁹ Eleanor Melville Metcalf (ed.), *Journal of a Visit to London and the Continent by Herman Melville 1849-1850* (Cambridge, Mass, 1948). From this experience came a story called 'Poor Man's Pudding and Rich Man's Crumbs' repr. in Raymond W. Weaver (ed.) *The Works of Herman Melville*, xiii, *Billy Budd and Other Prose Pieces*, (London, 1924).

Sharing the same meal, if two days apart, Melville, the curious tourist, stumbled across a place where the modern City met a City of antiquity. This was a City once again peopled with 'characters', this time not Sala's living spectres of 'widowers left with sickly children', the small tradesman that had been ruined or the 'worn-out, unfortunate clerk', but ghosts from the City's dead past. Its essence could be found, for example, in ideas of a village City, in the so-called medieval Halls of the Livery Companies, planted among the monied institutions or, as Melville revealed, it could be imagined below the modern City, remaining somehow subterranean.

The alternative view of the City saw it as 'charming', 'romantic' and 'wonderful', to embrace the parlance of celebratory guidebooks much in vogue both during the period and looking back fondly upon it later. Designed to celebrate the glories of the heart of Empire, they imagined the City through 'foreign' eyes and the gaze of the visiting 'country cousin' or the inquisitive child. In this they vied with the late Victorian and Edwardian drum and trumpet school textbook histories.⁵⁰ Marked off from earlier London guides that were often written for the dandy bachelor and unlike the more conventional guidebook designed for the tourists' gaze or the returning colonialist, they began their rambles at the City's hub, the streets converging on the Bank of England or, on occasion, at St. Paul's Cathedral.⁵¹ From here the urban Rambler would be led on a tour of the City's 'hidden' corners; the Wren church, the tavern loaded with literary connections and the by ways of *The London Nobody Knows*.⁵² Dickens' alter ego in his *Uncommercial Traveller* in 1860 described this alternative City, and spoke of its rotting and mildewed dead (and departed) citizens. Walking out one Sunday, he could smell the 'dry whiff of wheat' in Mark Lane; the flavours of wine and then tea

⁵⁰ This type of longing for the Victorian past is what Jose Harris called the 'Lost Domain'. See Jose Harris, *Private Lives, Public Spirit: Britain 1870-1914* (Oxford, 1993). The literature is immense, but see for example Harold Wheeler, *The Wonderful Story of London* (London, 1936); C. Whitaker-Wilson, *The Country Cousin's Guide to London* (London, 1935); Wilhelm F. Brand, *London Life Seen With German Eyes* (London, 1902); M.T.Z. Tyam, *London Through Chinese Eyes* (London, 1920); Paul Morand, *A Frenchman's London - Trans. Desmond Flower* (London, 1934); L.G. Bullock, *The Children's Book of London* (London, 1948); A.A. Methley, *A Child's Guide to London* (London, 1914); Notta Syrett, *Magic London* (London, 1922). Dedicated to the 'Citizens of London', eleven year-old Betty is transported to the past by a magical ring belonging to her Godmother, Strangeways. One moment she is in Roman London the next in the Middle Ages, next to the time of Dick Whittington, and then on to the London of the Georges and Dr. Johnson.

⁵¹ Paper given by David Gilbert, 'Representations of Imperial London in its Guidebooks', *Institute of Historical Research*, 28 May 1996.

⁵² Leslie Halliwell, *Halliwell's Film Guide* (London, 1993) p.716; *The London Nobody Knows*, GB 1967 53m Eastmancolor Norcon-British Lion, d. Norman Cohen; 'James Mason wanders round the capital's by-ways in search of relics from ages past'. My thanks to Alison Light for mentioning this source to me.

from Rood lane to Tower Street; a smell like a 'druggists drawer' near Mincing Lane; the flavour of 'damaged oranges' behind the Monument, and the 'cosmopolitan blast of fish' nearer the river.⁵³ On his way he came across a silent, ghost-like elderly couple making hay in one of the City churchyards. Dressed in the plain clothes of country folk, they were used as a device to evoke a distant memory of a City past, or the past of some who now made the 'City of the Absent' as he called it, if not their home, at least where they earned a living. Yet those still residing in the square mile numbered over 112,000 in 1861 and many remained active in its community life. Indeed when the rector of St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate attempted to convert the churchyard from a place of burial to an ornate garden, he was besieged by surviving relatives still living in the area, who could only be consoled by a personal audience in the Vicarage, a stiff drink and an assurance that the peacocks donated by Lady Rothschild would beautify their neighbourhood.⁵⁴ Although erected for temperance reasons, drinking fountains such as the one donated by Samuel Gurney MP, at the corner of St. Sepulchre's churchyard in 1859, and those that followed in 1860 at St. Dunstan's-in-the-East, Fleet Street and St. Botolph's, Bishopsgate, were all evidence, like the City's spiritual life, of a surviving population. However, unlike the Gothic fountain near Guildhall, the example raised behind the Royal Exchange in 1879 at a cost of £1,500 and another at Adelaide Place, London Bridge, designed by Sir Charles Barry and unveiled by Lord Mayor Fowler (1828-1891) in 1884, they served a dual function. They had a utilitarian purpose certainly, but they were also a symbolic gesture towards the fiction of a village London. Like the Aldgate pump at the junction of Fenchurch Street and Leadenhall Street, they evoked memories of lost neighbourhoods and could be thought of, as one commentary put it, 'as a curious relic of village life'.⁵⁵ Washhouses and public conveniences, in contrast, were much slower to be built, despite mounting pressure on the City Corporation from the 1840s.

The City's Livery Companies similarly harked back to a period of hard work and honest trade. The City's institutions of financial and commercial capitalism, or as it was designated, 'general society', were imagined as structures grafted on to and placed amongst the ancient City Livery Halls and churches. For the less intrepid Victorian, a walk around the rapidly changing City

⁵³ Charles Dickens, *The Uncommercial Traveller and Reprinted Pieces* (London, 1860), pp. 91-92.

⁵⁴ R.H. Hadden, 'Reminiscences', p.116.

⁵⁵ Helen W. Henderson, *A Loiterer in London* (London, 1927), p.355.

was a fashionable alternative to exploring the 'darkest' East End, or travelling into the poor man's country.⁵⁶ Following the guidebook, the urban Rambler could walk around the 'beautifully clean', 'excellently paved and lighted' and rebuilt streets of the City before, as one said, 'Turning down some little alley and entering the portals of one of these halls, we are transported at once from the busy streets and din of modern London into a region of old-world memories, which has a fascination that is all its own'. Here the walker is invited to recall 'the merry music of the minstrels or the performance of the players [that] delighted the gay throng. Pictures of ancient pageantry, their triumphs, their magnificent shows and gorgeous ceremonies flit before our eyes'. One pair of tourists, on being guided through the banqueting Hall of the Fishmongers' Company, found themselves in 'a dull-looking room, smaller than any we had yet seen. A fragment of bread, a half-eaten ham, and some butter stood on the table - not at all realising our conception of a City repast'.

⁵⁷ Linking past with present, another tourist imagined: 'In his Livery Hall, the old-world craftsmen, who lived over his shop, met his friends in the evening, and over a pot of beer or a flagon of malmsey discussed the politics of the period, swapped yarns and sang songs'.⁵⁸ Thought of as a 'strong bulwark of civic institutions and rights', it was judged that they were the best defence from 'hungry reformers' or Socialists.⁵⁹ Summoning up bygone times and manners, venerable customs and a unique history, they became entangled in both antiquity and a national view of the past, many recruits seeking membership of a Livery Company as a badge of respectability and belonging. Evoking the securities of the bygone days made perfect sense and formed a protective layer against the newly-installed London County Council which was, from 1889, thought to be responsible for 'old' London's vanishing landscape.

⁵⁶ William Margrie, *The Diary of a London Explorer - Forty Years of Vital London Life* (London, n.d.). This certainly caught on as by the 1920s there was a 'Homeland Association', 'for the encouragement of touring in Great Britain' and a London Explorer's Club was founded in 1930. It awarded prizes for those displaying knowledge of London, it rambled and held 'topographical races'. Its literary section argued for a citizen's parliament, holding debates on the subject. 'Know Your London' was the slogan and for an annual subscription of 2 shillings and 6d you would receive a badge inscribed with 'London Pride'.

⁵⁷ P. H. Ditchfield, *The Story of the City Companies* (London, 1926), p. 19.

⁵⁸ For examples of this literature see W. N. Hibbert, *History of the Worshipful Company of Founders* (London, 1925); J. W. Hawkins, *History of the Worshipful Company of the Art or Mystery of Feltmakers of London* (London, 1917); C. H. W. Mander, *A Descriptive and Historical Account of the Guild of Cordwainers of the City of London* (London, 1931); G. Elkington, *The Worshipful Company of Coopers with notes and recollections, 1873-1930* (London, 1930); C. H. Ashdown, *History of the Worshipful Company of Glaziers* (London, 1919).

⁵⁹ Colonel J. Blackham, *The Soul of the City, London's Livery Companies* (London, 1931), p. 4.

In the same way that Melville delved into the City's hidden corners, City antiquarians expressed a passion for locating this past, as it were, beneath them.⁶⁰ This enthusiasm was fuelled by the repeated discovery of Roman remains revealed in the course of City improvements. In March 1854, during the demolition of the Excise office in Threadneedle Street, a Roman pavement was found fifteen feet below the surface and another at the site of the Peabody statue also at the City's centre. In 1873, as the Lord Mayor was laying the foundation stone of the New Deposit Company at the eastern end of Queen Victoria Street, a hoard of Roman antiquities was found. The site of old London as a flourishing Roman colony was brought to mind. Imaginations went back further than the 'half-mythical' Old Lud to, as 'Aleph' romantically put it, 'the settlement of bold British aborigines, whose inexpensive dwellings were framed of mud and branches of trees cut in the forests of Middlesex'.⁶¹ The long lost river of Walbrook, now disappeared below ground, was said to run under the centre of the City and out into the Thames. Indeed, de Fraine claimed to have shown it to interested antiquarians as late as the 1920s. Here, while working at the printing department of the Bank of England, he claimed to have lifted a cover in a basement storage room where the river that had divided Roman London in two 'could be seen merrily flowing its old course'.

⁶²

The City's most eminent antiquarian, however, was Charles Roach Smith (1807-1890), a numismatist and stalwart of many of Britain's archaeological societies.⁶³ As a young man he worked in a wholesale warehouse at Snow Hill in the City of London. Later he lived at Lothbury at the corner of Founders' Court and behind the Bank of England. From this vantage point he led a team of young enthusiasts who were attempting to preserve tessellated pavements, sculptures and the like from the path of City improvements. As a reward for his work he was greeted by the Corporation with a mixture of 'great apathy', 'rude and studied obstinacy', and even persecution.⁶⁴ Indeed he brought an action against them when they sought to evict him, eventually finding himself

⁶⁰ Philippa Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional - Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838-1886* (Cambridge, 1986).

⁶¹ 'Aleph', *'London Scenes'*, pp.118-125.

⁶² De Fraine, *'Servant'*, pp.97,98.

⁶³ Charles Roach Smith, *Retrospectives, Social and Archaeological* (London, 1883).

⁶⁴ Henry Smetham, *C.R.S. and His Friends - Being Personal Recollections of Charles Roach Smith and his Friends* (London, 1929), p.19.

at an address in Liverpool Street, Bishopsgate, somewhat poorer and his collection of artefacts permanently dispersed. He wasted little time in besmirching the name of the Corporation, and continued to argue for the cause of conservation in the City.⁶⁵ One of these causes was a campaign to find a permanent home for his collections and to establish a museum of City antiquaries. Offering to sell the result of half a lifetime's work to the Corporation, at an independently adjudicated price, Roach Smith saw proposals for a museum rejected by the ratepayers' on the grounds of cost at a meeting held at the Mansion House in November 1855. Not surprisingly, perhaps, he reacted angrily: 'The decision of the meeting was really a very fair expression of the state of mind of the majority of the shopocracy of the City. If the sentiments of the industrious artisans, of the clerks, of the prentices, and of the youth of the City, who are not ratepayers, could have had weight, a free museum would have been voted forthwith'.⁶⁶ The City Corporation's precious fascination in the past developed slowly then, but the eventual result was a resplendent new library built in 1873. The first library, in 1828, had housed 2,800 volumes and a Free Circulating Library had been introduced in 1853. Annual attendance had climbed from 14,316 in 1868 in the old library to 173,559 by 1874 in the new. In fact the collection was improved constantly with 50,000 books stocked by the time the warehouseman, traders and their employees petitioned in 1876 - partly fulfilling the prophecy made by Roach Smith - for the library to be kept open until nine o'clock every evening, except Saturday. By this time too the incorporated Guildhall Museum in Basinghall Street was a popular attraction, having expanded from just one room in 1840, and was home to the kind of Roman finds that the City was constantly yielding and that Roach Smith had worked so tirelessly to rescue.

People, as well as artefacts, haunted the City too. Here the City of finance was ushered to one side. Instead, celebratory books on the City reminded their readers that Cromwell had a mansion in Throgmorton Street and married Elizabeth Bouchier at St. Giles, Cripplegate - the church where John Milton and Foxe of the *Book of Martyres* lay buried.⁶⁷ Sir Thomas More was born in Milk Street, Aldermanbury, Pope was born in Lombard Street and Gray in Cornhill. The

⁶⁵ *Public Dinner given to C. Roach Smith, at Newport, Isle of Wight on Tuesday, August 28, 1855* (London, 1855).

⁶⁶ Quoted in Brian Holey, 'Charles Roach Smith (1807-1890) Pioneer Rescue Archaeologist', *The London Archaeologist*, 2, (1975), xiii, p.330, n.6.

⁶⁷ Timothy Lang *The Victorians and the Stuart Heritage - interpretations of a discordant past* (Cambridge, 1995), esp., 'Cromwell and the late Victorians', pp.184-220.

City's favourite, Milton, was born in Broad Street and his third marriage took place at St. Mary's, Bow Lane. Sir Thomas a' Becket was born on the site of the Mercers' Hall, Fredericks Place. St. Mary Woolnoth, Lombard Street, was remembered as the host for the many speeches of Hannah More and Wilberforce, raging against the sin of slavery. St. Sepulchre's, Holborn was the last resting place for Captain John Smith who was said to have married the daughter of an American Indian Chief. The father of that great recorder of London life and politics, Hogarth, had a school at Ship Court, Old Bailey, and Percy Bysshe Shelly married Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin at St Mildred, Bread Street in 1816. It was remembered that Disraeli had been an articled clerk in Old Jewry in 1821, that Trollope was a clerk at the Goldsmith's Hall and then an employee at the General Post Office, that Thackeray's office overlooked St. Peter's when he edited the *Cornhill Magazine*, and that Cecil Rhodes took his breaks from the nearby Chartered Company at the Bay Tree in St. Swithin's Lane. Literary connections also included those of Charles Dickens who, like his illustrator Hablot K. Browne or *Phiz*, lived at Furnival's Inn, later to be the site of Alfred Waterhouse's magisterial building that housed the Prudential Insurance Company. Perhaps Dickens, before any other, captured contemporary imagination and its sense of the City's vanishing landscape, particularly as it was a favourite pastime of the Victorian enthusiast to guess the real locations mentioned in his novels.⁶⁸ Other literary explorers recalled searching for the Tubard, immortalised by Chaucer as the rendezvous of the Canterbury Pilgrims, complaining that they only found a signboard, bearing its name, fixed over a modern public house.⁶⁹ Shakespeare, in contrast, was imagined by these celebratory guidebooks to be all around the City, at one moment walking in the street and in another sitting in a churchyard.

In change was sought changelessness, amidst noise was craved silence, and amongst complication, simplicity. 'Was it possible that these same stones listened to the joyous bells of Cromwell's wedding and the slow tolling, for Milton's funeral?' was a familiar muse.⁷⁰ The City came to be imagined in calmness, on a Sunday or at night. Ghosts of a haunting past became a common metaphor:

⁶⁸ See, for example, Arthur H. Beaven, *Imperial London* (London, 1901); T. Edgar Pemberton, *Dickens London; or London in the Work of Charles Dickens* (London, 1876); Arthur Moreland, *Dickens Landmarks in London* (London, 1931).

⁶⁹ E.S. Machell Smith, *Our Rambles in Old London* (London, 1895), p.41.

⁷⁰ Mrs Robert Henrey, 'The Virgin of Aldermanbury', p.39.

We cannot do justice to these effects during the noontide roar; but when nocturnal shadows loom around - when the tall, ghostly-looking houses seem sunk into a dead sleep, and every doorway a puzzling recess may harbour phantoms of the old City - then, as we look up, man's work's mingle with the glories of nature, and put on a sublimity heightened by their indefiniteness of outline.⁷¹

Another commentator, blackly but in a similar vein of Romantic melancholy, walked through the rain and the near-deserted streets amongst a few passers by, sheltering under their umbrellas and likened the scene to a 'well-ordered cemetery'. Here, amongst the deserted squares and streets, people 'have the look of uneasy spirits who have risen from their graves' and, remarkably, by observing their visage and gait, the writer's thoughts turned to suicide.⁷² More gently, guidebooks variously describe the search for 'islands of peace', 'secluded bits of ancient churchyard', 'portions of long-forgotten convent garden' and 'antique plane groves', one planted by three churchwardens in 1821 on the corner of Wood Street is described more than once.⁷³ Buildings, as well as trees and flowers, are attributed memories. Spaces, such as the Royal Exchange become transformed in the imagination, peopled once again by the Dutch trader or Hebrew bill-broker, making the 'ghosts of the bargains of the past'.⁷⁴ The old Royal Exchange, destroyed by fire in 1838, was remembered fondly for its statues of 'stony Plantagenets' and 'royal effigies' of which only two, Elizabeth I and Charles II survived. Here, in the open air, people went about their business, while shops faced inwards to the square. There may have been hot muffins and port served at rivals such as Garraway's, a certain attraction on cold and rainy days, but here was the freemasonry of the market: intimate and vital. By the 1870s, however, the walls of the Exchange were defaced with advertisements, by the 1880s a roof had been added and by the turn of the century fresco pictures, including one by Sir Frederick Leighton that depicted scenes from the nation's history, had replaced the advertising. Later still, the shops faced out into the street and the markets had gone elsewhere. The longing, on the whole, was for a more communitarian golden age. Nowhere is this clearer than

⁷¹ 'Aleph', *London Scenes*, p.234.

⁷² Taine, 'Notes on England', quoted in Francesca M. Wilson, *Strange Island*, p.219.

⁷³ See, for example, E.T. Cook, *Highways and Byways in London* (London, 1902).

⁷⁴ Aylmer Vallance, *The Centre of the World* (London, 1935), p.26. Vallance describes the City as an organic (if highly specialised and individualistic) whole. It was not a 'conglomeration of persons pre-occupied with finance', but 'the romantic heir to the comic dignity of Guilds and Worshipful Companies'.

in the demolition or reaction to the removal of City churches. As City improvements, funded by coal dues collected as a tariff by the Corporation at the City's boundaries, turned churchyards into 'gardens', and closed some City churches for ever, the needs of business and the instinct of the conservationist clashed.

(vii)

Two facets of the City, modern and antiquated, Mammon and God, met in prayer in February 1873, when the King's Weigh House Chapel on Fish Street Hill was under repair. The Revd. Thomas Binney, a leading nonconformist, decided the solution was to hold a service in the Lombard Exchange.⁷⁵ Not least because of the continuing popularity of the dissenting congregations the religious and demographic census figures of 1851 had been worrying enough to prompt the Bishop of London and the Diocese of Middlesex to deal with the surplus churches now considered redundant. The result was the Union of Benefices Act (1860). This Act, and its subsequent amendments, had the effects of demolishing some of the churches in the City, selling the land, and redistributing its assets; of moving the churches into the suburbs, and of uniting some of the parishes.⁷⁶ The upshot was a severe backlash from the conservationists, who believed by now that any attack on the City constituted an assault on a national institution. However, as many of the resident population drifted away, it was a conception of a City only half remembered. The Corporation then raised its history in defence of its present, while its members - once Liberal, then Liberal Unionist, and later Conservative - convinced themselves of its unique, even monastic, qualities. Similarly, many of those actively engaged in banking and finance, particularly those also involved of the City's associational life, sought to mitigate some of the worst effects of their activities. Thus some of the great Victorian antiquarian and conservation bodies were supported by members of the Corporation, seeking the conservation of this church or that shop front. They joined

⁷⁵ *City Press*, Saturday, 22 February 1873.

⁷⁶ Charles Hume, *Papers in Connection with a Plan for Removing Some of the City Churches to Places Within the Metropolitan District, where Church Accommodation is Required* (London, 1853); Charles Hume, *Proposal for Supplying the suburbs of London with some of the Churches not Required in the City* (London, 1853). In most instances, it was found that assets and sponsors were not so easily distributed as the dead as 800 bodies were excavated and moved to Nunhead Cemetery during the 1930s; Chris Brooks and Andrew Saint (eds.) *The Victorian Church - Architecture and Society* (Manchester, 1995).

organisations such as the National Footpaths' Preservation Society, the Royal Society of Antiquaries, the Royal Historical Society, the Commons Preservation Society as well as the Public Museums and Free Libraries Association. In fact the involvement of members of the Corporation in the modernisation of the City, through sanitary, building and utility activities were simultaneous with the conservation of noteworthy architecture and places of historical worth. Far from lying as polar opposites, modernisation and conservation were, instead, sometime bedfellows. When selecting, in a petition to Parliament, which churches should be included as worthy of preservation, members of the Royal Institute of Architects climbed to the top of St. Paul's Cathedral and surveyed the roofscape of towers and steeples 'spread beneath them in wonderful confusion'. This was not a new experience. The City Corporation had long taken an interest in the role of the churches in the light of improvements, even when the population was not declining but increasing. Of particular concern on this occasion, however, was the fate of the Wren churches. Professor Thomas Leverton Donaldson, speaking for the Royal Institute of Architects, spoke for many others when he said that as there were so many temples of Mammon, then at least one church of Christ might be spared. Despite his appeal, and many others like it, at least fourteen Wren churches were destroyed in as many years in order to make way for City developments. Also speaking for the conservationists, was the 'City and Churchyard Protection Society', one of Victorian England's great antiquarian societies and a great favourite with City figures. Its manifesto was clear:- 'These churches are a witness in a busy age of the piety of our forefathers, and remind us that commercial enterprise and the amassing of riches are not the true end of life'. In the same spirit of regret at the nature of modern, avaricious living, Common Councillor Bloomfield Bernal (sometimes spelt Burnell) recalled in 1873 that some of the churches already destroyed:- St. Bartholomew, Bow Church, St. Christopher-le-Stock and St. Benet Fink had already made way for the buildings of the re-vamped centre of the City. He also recalled the concerns of the inhabitants of the City, and when the arguments of the bankers and merchants won the day on the occasion that St. Benet's Gracechurch had been demolished. Similarly, when St. Mary Woolnoth was under threat the scheme was objected to by all the inhabitants of the City on the grounds of its 'historical recollections', as the place where public opinion was first roused to the abolition of slavery.⁷⁷ Modernity and conservationism stared each other in the face once again and so did alternative visions of the City's past.

⁷⁷ (PP) *Minutes of Evidence Taken Before the Select Committee of the Union of Benefices Bill, 4 March 1873.*

That these two representations of the City, modern and venerable, could co-exist in the lives of those who, one way or another, occupied the City suggests that the seemingly incompatible politics of modernisation and antiquity might be described as alternate sides of the same coin. The casual and the poor, the shopocracy of the City and the world of finance were not discrete but were all contiguous with each other. The City Corporation was not a politically moribund survival but was actively concerned with managing relations between these overlapping identities. This is not to say that the Corporation took a neutral stance between these groups - it served the needs of the powerful - nor is it to say that it was necessarily indifferent to the needy. As is widely acknowledged, much of its activity took on the mantle of charity. Indeed charity, along with education, were two of the ways in which the Corporation and the Liveries found a social role.⁷⁸ The City of modernity did, notwithstanding its contradictions, live abreast the often mythological City of the past and this - as the next chapter will explain - was politically crucial. The financial institutions and their growing alliance with the City Corporation underpinned the re-development, which transformed the fabric of the City. Moreover, they had an interest in presenting themselves as participating in both representations of the City: in one moment triumphant about their innovative genius and financial might, in another recollecting the timeless nature of the Corporation, its rituals, and its environs. It is striking how completely and successfully they matched their clearing and building and the ensuing decanting of the City's poor with the legitimating idiom of conservation and antiquarianism. In this respect they could destroy churches while supporting all of the attempts to conserve them. Without its emphasis upon the past the Corporation would simply have appeared rapacious, but without the urgent sense of modernity the City could not have developed as a thriving financial centre. Perhaps modernisation and conservation in the City was, after all, less of a paradox than it initially appeared, and perhaps too the civic City and the financial City were something less than separate entities.

⁷⁸ When the Royal Commission on Parochial Charities sat between 1878 and 1880, it was reported that there were 1,400 individual charities spread amongst 106 City Parishes. The City Parochial charities were only rationalised in 1891. See Victor Belcher, *The City Parochial Foundation 1891-1991* (Aldershot, 1991).

Chapter Two

Liberalism Divided: Politics in the City ¹

The City of London is the cradle of all our great establishments, and of the civil and religious liberties of the land. (Henry Brougham)

When attention is drawn to the Chartist rally of 10 April 1848, the historian's gaze most often falls on the gathering on Kennington Common, or else it lingers to consider the meeting that evening of the Christian Socialists, Ludlow, Maurice and Kingsley. Less often does the eye wander across the Thames to the City, where arrangements were being made to tame the dog that, in the end, failed to bark. As the demonstration added to its number at points along the route of the march, the City placed guards on the Thames bridges, while thirty pieces of heavy field ordinance were kept in a state of readiness at the Tower. ² The police had already been on duty day and night since March, dealing with minor tremors of disturbance and keeping a special watch on the City's ammunition and gun makers. On the day of the expected earthquake, in addition to the ward forces placed on the main stations of defence, volunteers were posted at the Cross Keys Inn, Gracechurch Street, the Royal Exchange and Bridewell Hospital while the Artillery Company was kept at the Mansion House. Alderman Farebrother (-1858), Alderman Sir William Magnay (1797-1871) and Alderman Sir James Duke (1792-1873) were placed in charge of London Bridge, Southwark Bridge and Blackfriars Bridge respectively. ³ Behind these defences the citizens held their breath.

Elsewhere in the City, in one of its outermost wards, Alderman Challis (1794-1874), on orders from Lord Mayor John Kinnersley Hooper (1791-1854), organised eight Divisions of Common Councillors to lead 720 specially-sworn Constables drawn from the general population (of

¹ A primitive version of this chapter was given at a conference on *Elites in Urban History* at the University of Edinburgh on 30 March 1995.

² Charles Welch, *Modern History of the City of London: A Record of Municipal and Social Progress from 1760 to the Present Day* (London, 1896), p. 194.

³ (C.L.R.O.) Misc. Mss 244.5, *Collection of Letters, Notices and Other Documents Concerning the Preservation of the Peace During the Chartist Riots in 1848*; see also Iorwerth Prothero, 'Chartism in London' *Past and Present*, 44, August (1969), pp. 76- 105; David Goodway, *London Chartism 1838-1848* (Cambridge, 1982). The City's delegate to the Chartist's 1845 convention was expelled as a pacifist critic of the Land Plan and a supporter of Thomas Cooper, see Goodway, p.58.

approximately 22,653 throughout the City, including 670 members of the Bank of England).⁴ Ward beadies were sent to the Mansion House to apply for 200 more staves to be distributed to the taverns and school rooms where the Divisions were steeling themselves for the coming attack and where one shilling was voted to every man for refreshments. As tension mounted, the temper of the City's body of laws was severely tested and defences, modelled on its localised government structures, examined. It is interesting to record, therefore, that proceedings in the wardmote of Cripplegate Without were kept on a constitutional footing. Here a formal motion was passed complaining to the Lord Mayor and his functionaries that the requested staves of 'superior quality' had not been supplied, causing it was thought, 'serious injury to the collecting of the power and intention of the ward authorities'.⁵ Despite this, the Chartist meeting passed off without serious incident and the City was safe. The Lord Mayor, having been in continuous contact with the Home Secretary Sir George Grey, received a letter from him on 12 April thanking the 'loyal and constitutional spirit which has been evinced by the great body of the inhabitants of the City of London and of the whole Metropolis, on the occasion of the recent apprehension of the disturbance of the public peace'.⁶ On this occasion, as on others, the City of London Corporation, along with the financial City, had acted together as a communality:- an aggregation of Lord Mayor and Alderman, officer and citizen, Mansion House and distinct locality or ward. As the mainstream of Chartism seeped away and some of its former enthusiasts paddled along their own lonely tributaries, three citizens of the City, Joshua Toulmin Smith, Charles Pearson and Benjamin Scott (1814-1892) combined to publish, in 1849, a newspaper called *The Citizen*.⁷ Although it was

⁴ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 14, 600, 20 *Special Meeting convened in the Committee Room of the Bank of England Monday, 10 April 1848.*

⁵ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 6043, 3 *Wardmote Minutes of Cripplegate Without, Monday, 10 April 1848.*

⁶ (C.L.R.O.) Misc. Ms. 244.5, *Collection of Letters, Notices and Other Documents Concerning the Preservation of the Peace During the Chartist Riots in 1848.*

⁷ The precise ownership of this paper devoted to 'Corporation interests' is unclear. However, Benjamin Scott, long time Chamberlain, recalls in evidence to the (PP) *Report and Evidence of Royal Commission on State of the Corporation of the City of London* (hereafter, *Royal Commission on State of City Corporation*) 1854, xxvi (1772), *Mins. Evid., B. Scott. Q. 4471-4483* that he and other officers of the Corporation, including the City Solicitor Charles Pearson, funded the enterprise from Corporation funds. Whether, and at what point, Toulmin Smith becomes sole-proprietor is disputed by Toulmin Smith's representative, Mr. P. Richardson. All witnesses though speak of buying the newspaper from a Mr Peet (P. Richardson. *Q. 2566-2589*). The *Citizen* was not the last newspaper to be run in the interests of the Corporation. The *City Press* was seen as an 'organ' of the Corporation, and the *Metropolitan* was owned and edited by Common Councillor Dresser Rogers while another *Citizen* in the 1870s was owned by Alderman Whitehead.

short-lived and its readership was limited, it marks an important turning point in the affairs of the City Corporation as it articulated the varying importance of what all three, for differing reasons, thought of as the City's last radical stand.

It would be wrong, therefore, to regard the response to the events of 1848 as simply the defence of City financial interests. As the City changed structurally and politically in the years leading to 1886, these three men were instrumental in its transformation. In the course of this chapter it will become clear as each is treated in turn, that they articulated views within the City that shadowed its physical changes. But equally, they argued that the community that they served should evolve in differing ways. Toulmin Smith's radicalism harked back to an imagined society of local autonomy and individual rights and duties, a universal system of self-government betrayed by previous reforms to Parliament that edged towards representative democracy. Both Pearson and Scott, in contrast, articulated differing visions of Liberalism, with Pearson acting as a philosophical bridge from Toulmin Smith to Scott. While Pearson defended the notion of community in the same vein as Toulmin Smith, he was determined from as early as 1817 to confine its duties and benefits to the middle class, first the wholesalers, and then later, the retailers of the City. In the years approaching 1867, Scott would go further and hew out another electoral constituency on behalf of the Corporation, but one that was claimed through the City's Ratepayer Associations in the name of property and its rights. As each individual is examined, their political opinions will be viewed through the lens of the previous chapter: a City modern, diverse and defined by its centre, consumed by reminiscences of an apparently less acquisitive, more communitarian past, but where the minorities and outsiders of its periphery, although progressively excluded by all except Toulmin Smith, were omnipresent.

(i)

As a sometime lawyer in the City, the first of this trio, Joshua Toulmin Smith, has been described as going beyond the limits of orthodox Chartism. In the early 1850s he was proposed as an Ultra-radical MP in Sheffield by the Chartist and Democrat, Isaac Ironside, a candidature supported by the *Sheffield Free Press*. Here, as elsewhere, Smith argued for the return to a wardmote system of local self-government. Born into a Owenite family and the son of a notable

educational reformer, he paradoxically made his mark as a constitutional conservative within progressive ranks, and has consequently earned a reputation, amongst historians at least, as a maverick. Like the collective voice of *The Citizen* newspaper, he argued for the preservation of worthwhile institutions, for free trade, the local assessment of taxes, and the rights and responsibilities of both subject and sovereign, 'as a creature of law', while arguing against state interference in matters of religion.⁸ More than this familiar Liberal fare, however, his perspective derived from a particular notion of human nature, liberty and constitutional propriety.⁹ From these concerns he drew propositions regarding the place of the other-regarding individual within society, and a form of government inspired on one hand by the cause of Kossuth and the Hungarian reformers, and on the other by historical examples gleaned from antiquity.¹⁰ Toulmin Smith was in essence a critic of representative politics. Unlike many of the independent and reformist radical voices that could be heard in Parliament, he thought that even retrenchment and accountability were poor returns for the surrender of local sovereignty and the extension of the franchise to the middle class. This was a class he considered to be singularly ill placed to take their position in the affairs of the nation, particularly when compared to the superior qualities of the artisan. As all common law, he reasoned, was derived from the people, so too must its structures be administered by the people, in their communality. Parliamentary reform had been regarded as a panacea, but it was a false one:

There is no doubt that the tendency of the Reform Act [1832] has been, not to put the actual franchise in the hands of the most independent and the most intelligent class of the community - the artisan class - but into the hands of a class, which,

⁸ J. Toulmin Smith, *The Three Points at Issue in the Church Rate Question (Tract No. 3, Manchester Church Defence Association)* (1856). Curiously for a progressive, Toulmin Smith defends the paying of the Church rate as an essential way of preserving the parish system as the 'first unit of civil government'. The intrusion of the Clergy, 'of one religious faith', into the government of the parish assembled 'to discuss and transact their secular affairs, is but one, though a most mischievous, example of priestly usurpation and encroachment'; J. Toulmin Smith, *The People and the Parish: the Common Law and its Breakers* (London, 1853).

⁹ W.H. Greenleaf, 'Toulmin Smith and the British Political Tradition', *Public Administration*, 59, (1975) suggests that human nature, freedom and administrative efficiency could be added to constitutional propriety as the foundations of his political principles. At the beginning of his career Smith believed that human conduct derived from the mind, and could be understood through the 'science' of phrenology'. See, A. McLaren, 'Phrenology: Medium and Message', *The Journal of Modern History*, xlv, (1974), pp.86-97.

¹⁰ J. Toulmin Smith, *Parallels Between the Constitution and Constitutional History of England and Hungary* (London, 1849).

though most mistakenly and unwisely, is actually and increasingly, owing to the growing influences of Centralisation, the least independent of any; namely that of small traders and retail shopkeepers.¹¹

In contrast to the wholesaler and retailer or the shopocracy, as it was pejoratively labelled, the artisan was considered by Toulmin Smith to be more open to reason and argument, yet not in a way that was susceptible to the mob. Their occupations lent them to spontaneity and to the 'native powers of mind'. On the other hand, City shopkeepers, the like of which were thought to make up the bulk of the Common Council, were likely to be less able to make fair judgements because of the nature of their callings and their reliance on the goodwill of others. As an avowed eclectic he feared that government would become, like any other facet of political economy, just another specialised occupation in the division of labour. Although he became President of the Geologists Association and gave the inaugural lecture in 1859 his real passion was politics and the constitution. Associated with the City of London as a young man, he was, with the Revd. H. Solly, later to be another disillusioned Chartist and educationist, a member of *The Academics*, a debating and Mutual Improvement Society concerned with history and political economy. Meeting every fortnight in the teetotal and smokeless parlour of the counting house of Solly's father in Mincing Lane or the King's Head in Poultry, they produced a monthly magazine called the *Portfolio*.¹² Although this group of a dozen or so was dissolved in 1839, it was from these beginnings that Toulmin (as he will be called hereafter) developed ideas that would carry him through a lifetime.

As conventional reform to Toulmin was a distraction, his scepticism towards representative democracy was sharpened by a period in America during the late 1830s.¹³ Here he found a freedom amongst democrats quite unbalanced by responsibility. Money, not duty, was the debased currency of citizenship and the good society. He did not oppose property but argued instead that the defence of the property-owner was not the purpose of government. Rather it had a function in itself, namely to establish the nostrum that the individual, by his active contribution, was part of a whole. The overall purpose of this body was to strive towards the shared project of human happiness and progress. The conviction, on his premature return from the New World, that

¹¹ J. Toulmin Smith, *Local Self- Government and Centralisation* (London, 1851), p. 242.

¹² Henry Solly, *These Eighty Years or The Story of an Unfinished Life* (London, 1893).

¹³ J. Toulmin Smith, *Journal in America 1837-1838* (United States, 1925).

representative democracy was poorly placed to serve man's full nature, was compounded by a dispute with the Customs and Excise authorities whom he believed wielded an arbitrary power on behalf of the state contrary to ancient English liberties. The result, until his early death by drowning in 1869, was a body of work that emphasised the responsibilities of the individual and his fellows as a social animal, and the rights that might subsequently be enjoyed as a citizen. It was in the meeting of these prerequisites, right matched by duty, that the citizen, *prima facie* fit and able, could take up the mantle of full rationality. The arena for the working out of this theorem was England's antiquated system of local government, with the parish or ward as the primary unit of organisation. Toulmin, speaking with an historicist inflection, opposed citizenship based on a property qualification while his politics, similarly, did not echo those of philosophical radicalism. Rather, as one whose constitutional radicalism had deep conservative or traditional roots, he looked back to the 'local elective management' of pre-Norman governmental structures.¹⁴ Practically, this meant, amongst other things, opposition to what he perceived to be the intrusive power of central government into areas of public health and the local basis of poor relief. As a member of the Hornsey vestry and the 'Association of Parochial Representatives' as well as the City's Farringdon Without wardmote, he insisted on the prevention of the 'gradual usurpation of arbitrary power' from local to national government.¹⁵ Certainly, Toulmin's radicalism was legalistic, but it differed somewhat from the mid-century diagnosis of many radicals and the remedies he developed were fundamentally at odds, as we shall see, with the Liberalism on offer within the City's Ratepayers' Associations of the late 1850s and 1860s.

The language of political and religious liberty was a familiar one in the City, and by 1848 was a shared trope for those who rallied to political colours of every hue. As a staunch ally of reforming governments, the Corporation was in the van of progressive opinion in the years leading to the passing of the Reform Act, pre-eminent in the liberal cause. It had petitioned for reform, for the reduction of sinecures, retrenchment in public expenditure, abolition of slavery, state lotteries, the packing of juries, and the discrimination in law against Catholics and Jews. Internal reforms of

¹⁴ It also makes up a considerable historiography. See for example, C. Hill, 'Norman Yoke' in C. Hill (ed.) *Puritanism and Revolution* (Harmondsworth, 1958); John Brewer, 'Saxons, Normans and Victorians' in Asa Briggs (ed.) *Images, Problems, Standpoints, Forecasts* (Brighton, 1985).

¹⁵ *The Citizen*, Saturday, 13 January 1849; J. Toulmin Smith, *A Letter to the Metropolitan Sanitary Commissioners* (London, 1848); J. Toulmin Smith, *Government by Commissions - Illegal and Pernicious* (London, 1849).

the City included rationalisation of the duties and rewards of officers, abolition of the ballot to voters in 1833 in order to return accountability to elected members. This, it was thought, would reduce patronage and corruption, making the actions of the Corporation transparent to its constituency. It was a process that was furthered with the printing of accounts and minutes of proceedings from 1811, seats for newspaper reporters in the Courts, the provision by the Common Council for divisions to be made in public from 1836 and for them to be published in the minutes. The sum of all these measures, or so it was argued by Pearson, was a modern administration looking outwards and in the service of the public good.¹⁶

This was certainly a version of the Corporation's past that would have found favour with Common Councillor Dresser-Rodgers (1824-1890), speaking to the Aldgate Ward Ratepayers' Association on the subject of the encroachment of railways:

I consider that the inhabitants of the ward should band themselves together, not only to protect their own interests, but to join with other wards of the City of London to assist, by co-operation, in obtaining in future Acts of Parliament concessions on several points of great importance to tradesmen and owners of property who would suffer most severely under the present system of compensation.¹⁷

Like Toulmin, this leading Common Councilman would have applauded ideas of mutuality and self-support, brotherhood, co-operation and friendship. However, at the heart of Dresser-Rogers' comments lurks the notion that ownership of property should be the prerequisite of the civic ideal. In other words, an alliance of property owners, as expressed here, suggested a divide in the citizenry, while the idea of joining together with other wards compromised the integrity of the locality. His comments are particularly enlightening, not least because they had become far from untypical, but also because Dresser-Rogers would wear another hat as George Howell's faithful lieutenant on the executive of the Reform League.¹⁸ But that was in 1867. In between the qualities of social solidarity and localised activity, which had been on display during the threatened Chartist attack in

¹⁶ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids, Q. 8484*.

¹⁷ E. Dresser-Rogers, *Report on the Projected Railway Schemes Affecting the Ward of Aldgate-Aldgate Ward Ratepayers Association - read at a meeting of the society, 29 February 1864*.

¹⁸ (Bishopsgate Institute) *George Howell Collection Letter Books*, 880, 1A, *Reform League Council Minutes, Nov. 1866 to March 1869*.

1848 were destroyed. It was the abandonment of the principle of individual duty within the self-government of a discrete locality, regardless of social standing or wealth, which signalled a departure from Toulmin's ideas. Consequently it was at this junction that radicalism in the City came to a halt and Liberalism, and then Conservatism, would journey on.

Farringdon Without was home to at least a quarter of the City's population by mid-century. It was here that Toulmin attended the wardmote and argued that Freedom should derive from residency, not property, and set out like the Chartists, his own six points.¹⁹ The City of London Corporation, he insisted, was the last representative of 'true municipal self-government'. This was so for a number of reasons:- it promoted activity and participation within the citizenry, it was seen as a place of peaceful discussion, and its accessibility and openness engendered liberty - not the excrescence of privileged and exclusive interests.²⁰ Toulmin envisaged the individual at the hub of existence, with the locality and then the state, moving out in importance on a wave of concentric ripples. The individual and his rights, acting within a delimited sphere of influence, was a foil to an exclusive franchise. The difference, as he perceived it, and in opposition to the centralisers, was that administration should be placed at the nearest convenience to the individual within a community, not least because they were the most qualified to attend to its affairs.²¹ Local self-government, of which the Corporation was notionally the prime example, did not, as he put it, 'stir

¹⁹ Anon, 'Renovation of the Corporation of the City of London', *The Eclectic Review*, xxviii (August, 1850), p. 136, '1. The only constitutional test of citizenship (i.e., co-extensive rights and obligations) within the City of London, is a bona fide interest in the well being of the City, following from occupancy therein. 2. The presumption of law is, and always has been, that all occupiers are Free Men, and therefore, full citizens. 3. Even a proved self-born, if he resided for a year and a day within any city, became by the general law of England, thereby a Free Man; and therefore entitled to all the rights and privileges, and liable to all the obligations, of a Free Man born. 4. This noble privilege was always largely availed of within the City of London: hence there was always many freed-men among her men and citizens 5. Any exclusive class of 'freemen' within the City of London was unheard of till a comparatively late period; and the existence of such a class. as composing the Corporation, is unrecognised by, and in direct violation of, every charter, record, and statute. 6. Wards and Wardmotes are the constitutional and most effective mode of keeping the roll of citizens perfect, and of keeping the citizens themselves in continual active discharge of their rights and duties as free men'.

²⁰ J. Toulmin Smith, *Local Self-Government and Centralization* (London, 1851), p.46.

²¹ J. Toulmin Smith, 'Local Self-Government', p.34; 'That system [local self- government] brings it constantly home to the contemplation and the practice of every man, that the State is made up of individuals, of whom every one has his part to fulfil. The practical idea, and the result of centralisation, on the other hand, is, that the State is something apart from its members; and that its function, and the right to keep each and all of those members within a certain tether, the length of which it belongs to it to determine, and on which no right or responsibility of judging belongs to them'.

up class against class, and interest against interest'. Nor did it, he continued, 'serve to stimulate a shopocracy against an aristocracy, tenants against landlords, artisans against manufacturers. It has the harmonising effect, on the contrary, of producing, as a necessary result of its activity, a common feeling of neighbourhood and of united interests. It draws all classes nearer in kindliness and in daily life to one another, and teaches each man, practically, to do to others as he would be done by'.²² This type of social solidarity, involving face-to-face contact, the acknowledgement of rights, privileges, duties and responsibilities, the social binding of the locality, were more reminiscent of an organic community that was fading in the City by 1848. But this is why Toulmin clung so tenaciously to its remains. Indeed attendance, participation and discussion within all the structures of the City's local government were examples not only of 'a union of the interests and energies of all', as he coined it, but as importantly of *gemeinschaft*. In this sense he was at once radical and conservative: radical, in terms of arguing for an inclusive constitution and the duties of property, but conservative in his vision of retrieving from the past an ideal communality based in local self-government.²³

The main venue for the exercise of these ideas was the popularly elected wardmotes or 'folknotes' which glanced back to a highly localised form of Saxon government and as a system of administration met all of Toulmin's conditions of citizenship. The precinct meetings, for instance, as sub-divided areas of the ward, called the citizenry together in small groups and were places of civic activity, 'where every man was personally known to every other man. The opinions, the wants, the wrongs, the suggestions, of every single man, were there freely stated. The multitude was not insulted by being called to a 'Public Meeting', where two or three got on to a platform, and propounded 'Resolutions', cut and dried beforehand, which could not really be discussed'. Rather, public opinion grew up from below and then, as it were, presented itself to the wider community. This wider community gathered in turn in the fixed, frequent and periodical meetings of the full wardmote to, as Toulmin hoped, 'interchange and intercommunicate their experiences'.²⁴ Operating alongside each wardmote were the Inquest Committees charged with preventing nuisances, noting disorderly houses, maintaining public areas and common land, collating the

²² J. Toulmin Smith, *Local Self-Government*, p.46.

²³ J. Toulmin Smith, *What is the Corporation of London? and Who are the Freeman?* (London, 1850), p.22; Anon, *Renovation of the Corporation of London*, p.131.

²⁴ J. Toulmin Smith, *The Metropolis and its Municipal Administration* (London, 1852), p.48.

proper standards of measures within taverns, collecting alms for the poor and upholding ward duties as well as the electoral roll. Recruited from the main body of the ward, its thirty-six members met in private making it essential that they reported to the full body of the wardmote regularly.

Much to the dismay of Toulmin and to the relief of many, the functions of the Inquest Committee became in turn, blurred and usurped. Alderman Waterlow (1822-1906) giving evidence to the Royal Commission in the Corporation in 1854 argued for the abolition of these committees and insisted that the duties of the Inquest had been assumed or effectively centralised by other bodies. The keeping of the peace had become the responsibility of the police, common ground was in the care of the Surveyor or the Commissioner of Sewers, weights and measures were now checked by ale conners hired by the publicans, and the poor were either directed to the workhouse or thrown upon the City's parochial charities.²⁵ As non-attendance at the Inquest Committee had involved the imposition of punitive fines and burdens on those expected to participate, its abolition in 1856 was greeted with some relief. To Toulmin and others, the decision of the Common Council was deplorable and especially so to the elders of some wards, particularly in the context of a large population and a stubborn criminality.²⁶ Thus not all felt relieved of a burden. Castle Baynard ward voted to continue raising funds for the poor, and others like Cheap ward established a benevolent fund in 1857.²⁷ In the same year the 'Metropolitan Association for the Equalisation of the Poor Rates and the Abolition of the Law of Settlement' was set up, concerned with addressing these welfarist issues and to argue that the local dispensing of poor law provision was no longer adequate to meet modern conditions, particularly when those that could pay the poor rates had now moved to the suburbs. Its Chairman was Alderman Sidney (1805-1889), Lord Mayor during its inaugural meeting three years earlier. Toulmin had by this time founded the 'Anti-Centralisation Union', along with W.J. Evelyn MP and City clergyman Revd M. W. Malet, to protest at the undermining of local rights and responsibilities. Toulmin attended some of the Association's meetings, much to the

²⁵ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min., Evids., Q.* 2591.

²⁶ Caroline Gordon and Wilfrid Dewhirst, *The Ward of Cripplegate in the City of London* (Oxford, 1985), p. 137.

²⁷ G.L. (Mans) Ms.5644, Vol. 2 *Wardmote of Castle Baynard, 22 December 1856*; W. Gilbert, *An Inquiry into the Corporation, Its Livery Companies, and the Administration of Their Charities and Endowments* (London, 1877).

consternation of its members that included a number of prominent City figures.²⁸ The decline of the Inquest Committee, and the clash of these two organisations, serves to identify the different directions that Liberal politics in the City had by now embarked.

(ii)

Charles Pearson, as a Liberal and the second of those connected with the publication of *The Citizen* after the Chartist 'threat' of 1848 revealed, in his evidence to the Royal Commission on the City Corporation in 1854, that the undermining and dismantling of the structures of the City's constitution had in fact begun a lot earlier. As a Common Councilman from 1817, and long-time Solicitor of the City, Pearson had been associated with the Corporation from the age of twenty-three. His close political relationship with London radicals, including Lord Mayor Wood, led him to appeal to the inhabitants of the ward of Bishopsgate in 1819 for money to help the victims of the Peterloo Massacre, painting its details in lurid colours and warning of the consequences of what he termed 'military despotism'.²⁹ As a noteworthy reformer in the City, he had been delegated to the task, after a public meeting held at the Crown and Anchor public house called by Cartwright and Wooler in order 'to effect a coalition of all democrats'.³⁰ Despite this radical pedigree, if Toulmin argued for a Corporation as it might have been and should be, Pearson defended it as it was. The City's Solicitor recalled when the Corporation had become financially embarrassed after extending hospitality to 'foreign Emperors' as well as the Duke of Wellington. Indeed, the lavish extent of the City's entertainment in the dying years of the French Wars endured in the popular memory. The result was that the accounts became severely depleted, to the point where the baker refused to supply any more bread to prisoners under the charge of the City in Newgate Prison without the personal guarantee of the Lord Mayor himself. The crisis was met when Pearson and seven others were placed on the Bridge House Committee:

²⁸ G.L. (Mans) RM 1089 *Inaugural Minutes of the Metropolitan Association of the Poor Rates and the Abolition of the Law of Settlement, dated 15 February 1857*; I am grateful to my former student, Grace Knight, for a transcript of this meeting in advance of submitting her MA on the subject to Middlesex University.

²⁹ Charles Pearson, *To the Inhabitants of the Ward of Bishopsgate* (London, 1819).

³⁰ I.J. Prothero, *Artisans and Politics In Early Nineteenth Century London - John Gast and his Times* (Folkstone, 1979), p.116.

We vowed that we would neither eat nor drink at the public expense till we had rectified this, and got the Corporation out of debt, and than had the gratification of dining, like honest men, upon money fairly applicable to such a purpose. Now at that time we had got rid of all encumbrances upon the Corporation. Then there were very great merchants and bankers, and there were paupers and placemen in the court. From that time the Corporation has been pursuing what it had before begun, a system of reform, which has led very rich men to leave the Corporation; the very poor men it has excluded; and it has supplied the Corporation with the middle class to which, in my judgement, you can alone look for a good municipal body.³¹

The intention, to create a constituency of the 'middling sort', was followed by other reforms that secured the same aim. When the popular franchise in the City was divided from that of the Livery Companies after 1835, the process of excluding the polar extremes of the social range, both merchant and pauper and the building of the 'shopocracy', began in earnest. This was the antithesis of Toulmin's vision of a communality that would include the artisan. If the City of London Corporation was the ideal locality, the Freeman, as Pearson and the Corporation itself began to define it, was far from the ideal embodiment of citizenship that Toulmin envisaged. The remedy, in the City and elsewhere, was the introduction of universal suffrage as the 'inherent right of the People of England'. We must presume that Toulmin includes women as he made no effort to signal the contrary. He did though issue a warning regarding the limitations of universal suffrage:- 'if by universal suffrage is meant (which many do mean) that more men shall be able then than now to be driven up like sheep to the slaughter, to poll for him that talks loudest on the hustings, then indeed is universal suffrage a pure and unmixed evil, a stayer of progress, and unknown to the common law of England. It will merely be the machine for the more easily delegating empire to an oligarchy. And this is what universal suffrage always will be, as used in the parliamentary reform sense'. Despite the problems envisaged by representative democracy and the introduction of universal suffrage, he demanded annual parliaments, payment for members as well as the abolition of the property qualification as 'simply an appeal to common sense'. He did, however, oppose the ballot because it 'shuts the door at once [to] all true discussion'. These were rights that brought with them duties: 'to take an active part in the management of all the affairs that concern him', and to 'maintain

³¹ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min., Evids.*, Q. 8476.

himself and his immediate family upon the results of his own freely disposed means of effort'. This then should have been the definition of a Freeman and a citizen, although, he went on, 'this definition excludes every man who lives on alms, every man who will not use his powers in accordance with the duty and responsibility he owes to society, and every criminal. All these, it is clear - and no others - ought to be excluded'.³²

In stark contrast, Pearson and the Corporation as early as July 1819 evoked the power to compel traders or wholesalers within the City to claim its Freedom.³³ Its constitutional right to do so, however, was contested throughout the 1840s and beyond.³⁴ Accordingly, efforts by the Corporation to compel 'alien', 'foreign' or 'stranger' wholesalers to participate in the affairs of the City were truly hated. Some, having carried on their business here for twenty years or more, were abruptly called before the City's Chamberlain. Others who evaded their perceived responsibilities, were paid a visit by Mr Cheesewright, the Collector of Broker's Rents or his associates. An attempt would be made to coerce the transgressor to buy his Freedom by an *agent provocateur* who would purchase goods from an unsuspecting tradesman, thereby obtaining evidence for a prosecution.³⁵ This was the sort of action that set neighbour against neighbour. Finally, the Corporation was petitioned by one of its victims, similarly ensnared by a false transaction. As a wholesaler, born in Hanover, William Frederick Rock complained that he had employed thirty-six men in the City for a period of seven years until 1839, without molestation. Although Honorary Secretary of the 'City of London Corporation Reform Association', he protested that he did not even live in the City, preferring to travel from Barnstable. In a petition to Parliament he claimed that many traders were being ruined by the action of the Corporation. He was finally acquitted because the 'witness' mistook the date on which the goods were bought. To add insult to injury, he was charged fees before the Corporation consented to hear his appeal.³⁶ The negative publicity that this case appears to have attracted, had a sobering effect on the Corporation and marks a spot near to the

³² J. Toulmin Smith, '*Local Self-Government*', p.244.

³³ (C.L.R.O.) *Court of Common Council Minutes*, 15 July 1819.

³⁴ A. Pulling, *Laws, Customs of the City of London and Port of London* (London, 1842), p.66; George Norton, *An Exposition of the Privileges of the City of London in regard to the claims of Non-Freemen to deal by wholesale within its jurisdiction* (London, 1821).

³⁵ (C.L.R.O.) Misc. Mss. 184.1, *Wholesale Dealers Minute Book*, Friday 15 May 1829.

³⁶ (C.L.R.O.) *Court of Common Council Minutes*, 24 September 1840.

end of their campaign to recruit wholesalers to the City's Freedom. As Rock's case indicates, it appeared to be a campaign directly focused on raising money for the still impoverished Corporation, a response to Pearson's plan to steer the Corporation towards solvency, but also, and this was a departure, an expression of the Corporation's overriding desire to make it representative of the financial City. From 1844, as the prosecution of wholesalers without Freedom began to decline, the pursuit of retailers began to increase. Writing his last letter on English ground before leaving for a judicial post in India, a former Junior Common Pleader of the City, George Norton, highlighted some of the political problems facing the Corporation. He noted with concern that, from 1823, the population of wholesalers and merchants within the enfranchised community had increased proportionally, while retailers had decreased. In its renewed pursuit of retailers the Corporation was in danger of becoming unrepresentative: losing national status, and attracting only the 'humbler departments of trade'.³⁷ Consequently, the twin-track approach, designed both to relieve the Corporation of a financial burden collected during the wars with France, and to provide a constituency that would protect it when under attack from its political enemies, was a strategy failing by the 1840s. For one thing, it did not pass without comment that pursuit of the retailers and poorer members of the City would only serve to drive them across the boundaries into a greater London. Hence, a politics was created around resisting this constitutional outrage, with Toulmin as perhaps its most vocal exponent. Simultaneously, the Corporation campaigned in order to unite the Freedom with a franchise based on the interests of property.³⁸ Thus, after the coup of the wholesaler and shopocracy, described by Pearson, and then the determined advocacy of the ratepayer interest from the 1840s by Scott, the Corporation found in the years leading to 1867 that it had other masters to serve.

(iii)

With this long-standing policy in mind, of uniting the City's municipal authority with the interests of property, the Corporation promoted a Bill in 1849 designed to introduce the moderate

³⁷ (C.L.R.O.) Ms. 184.12 *Remarks and Suggestions by George Norton upon the Question respecting Wholesale Traders in the City of London, dated 25 February 1823.*

³⁸ (C.L.R.O.) *Court of Common Council Minutes, 5 April 1849.*

requirements that a City Freeman must be rated to the sum of £10 as an occupier; that he must be on the register of parliamentary electors for the City; and that the qualification for the office of Common Councillor should be raised. Moderate or not, the citizens of Farringdon Without were dismayed and called a wardmote in November of that year. Although Toulmin was not the initial convenor, the meetings held subsequently and in quick succession, were imprinted with his distinctive philosophical mark.³⁹ Essentially he led the ward in a demand for the qualification of occupancy, not rate paying, as the basis of the Freedom and citizenship. But, as he reminded his fellow citizens, it should not be forgotten what inhabitancy means: 'It does not mean that the person is, through all day and night, on the spot. It means, the having an *occupation* within a place. A man may have his house in one parish, his fields in another. He thus has an occupation, however within each, that which immediately affects him and his acts and thoughts. He is an 'inhabitant' of each'. To be a member of a political community required the payment of a fair and due 'scot and lot', but to do so was the occasion, not the origin, of a Free Born citizen: 'the paying of votes, or other scot, is *one of the obligations* which attach to citizenship. It must, therefore, *follow* and not lead; *rate-books* and *rate paying* must clearly, under any sound system, be a *result*, and not the *foundation*, of the Roll or Register'.⁴⁰ Toulmin wrote to explain his position to Alderman Duke, in the midst of accusations that he was more than a passive advisor to the agitation. Boasting, or perhaps threatening, support right across the City, he defended the cause of universality against the excluding ambitions of the Corporation. He did, however, lay two other demands before the authority. The first was concerned with what Toulmin, and a host of Common Councillors, regarded as the overweening powers of the Aldermanic Court, acquired by statute in 1725. The second was the more recent tendency to hound the retailer, an aberration that dated from the by now infamous meeting of the Tradesman's Freedom Committee in July 1844.⁴¹ Both offended against the true spirit of the City's ancient constitution, and both encouraged reforms that Toulmin considered to be artificial or synthetic. It was on this basis that the ward petitioned the Common Council for the qualification of occupancy for a year and a day as sole evidence of suitability to exercise the Freedom and the franchise. When the Common Council deferred its consideration the ward decided

³⁹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 8826, Vol.1 *Wardmote Minutes Farringdon Without, Monday, 23 December 1850*.

⁴⁰ J. Toulmin Smith, '*What is the Corporation?*', p.37.

⁴¹ J. Toulmin Smith, *Corporation of London 'Reform' to Sir James Duke, Bart. MP, Alderman of the Ward of Farringdon Without* (London, n.d.).

to take its case to Parliament. However, because of the potential antagonism of the Aldermen that represented the City, Toulmin was asked by the ward to request the assistance of the radical MP, Joseph Hume. (1777-1855) ⁴² Finally, after a number of meetings, Hume agreed to lend a hand but insisted that the City's representatives should be involved. It appears that Alderman Sidney, also one of the City's MPs, was recruited to the task, cajoled perhaps by electoral considerations. When at length the proposal was raised for consideration, it rested on four pillars:- the restriction of the imposition of fines on admission to the Freedom; a restoration of the Corporation's legitimate constitutional position; the requirement for a roll of citizens to be kept, and regular and open wardmotes to be held for all the citizenry. When Alderman Sir James Duke presented a Bill before Parliament in 1852 designed to reform the 1849 legislation, his proposals were also defeated, this time by the Livery Companies concerned to retain their separate voting rights. ⁴³ The proposals included a requirement for Freemen to be householders (whether that category was defined as a dwelling or a business premise), to partake in annual elections, and for a ward list to be kept. The response of the Corporation to its defeat was to issue over 4,000 summonses to retailers within the City in the first few months of 1853. Being called to take up their Freedom on pain of a fine was increasingly resented, particularly as both wholesalers and the merchants or bankers of the growing financial City were under no such obligation. This fact was not lost amid the volley of protests aimed at the hapless Corporation. Some of the more virulent attacks on the Corporation's 'ancient rights and privileges' came from the *Westminster Review* and *The Times*, both of which probed the role of the Freeman. ⁴⁴ This publicity undoubtedly put the City under the spotlight. Perhaps, though, the *Illustrated London News* was accurate when - at the moment a Royal Commission was established on the subject of the Corporation in 1854 - it declared that outside agitation was not to blame for its

⁴² G.L. (Mans) Ms. 9608 *Letter from Toulmin Smith to Joseph Hume MP dated 25 April 1850*.

⁴³ I.G. Doolittle, *The City of London And Its Livery Companies* (London, 1982), cf. p. 54.

⁴⁴ W.E. Hickson, 'The Corporation of London and Municipal Reform', *Westminster Review*, 39, (1843), pp. 496-571, and addenda, pp 572-586; W.E. Hickson, 'The Apologists of City Administration', *Westminster Review*, 41, (1844), pp 553-579; W.E. Hickson, 'City Administration - containing the case of the Non- Freemen', *Westminster Review*, 84, (1845), pp.553-579. It was a politics that was changing when Charles Pearson replied to these articles, and was one of the factors that eventually led to a national debate on the matter and, in time, to the Royal Commission. See Charles Pearson, *The Substance of the Address Delivered at a Public Meeting on the 11th, 12th and 18th of October, 1843 Containing a Brief History of the Corporation of London as the Asylum of English Freedom in Past Ages* (London, 1844).

plight, but that instead, 'The Corporation [had been] Killed By Its Friends'.⁴⁵ Attacked by a large band of Common Councillor's and citizens, led by Toulmin Smith in the ward of Farringdon Without, the Corporation was seen as corrupt and open to patronage, wasteful of parochial funds, over regulating, and unrepresentative of the wider City. These were questions and criticisms to which the Commission demanded a response. In the face of these accusations, if the evidence of the Town Clerk, Sergeant Merewether, to the Commission is accepted as Corporation policy, the City had modified the process, began by Pearson, to construct a fresh constituency, this time extending its reach to the financial City. Merewether complained that every effort had been made to find a solution to the charges of irresponsibility and lack of accountability levelled at the Corporation. After all, in Alderman Duke's 1852 attempt to legislate, 'residence is not at all mentioned; they must occupy premises, and these must be within the walls, and must be rated to the police rate. The principle upon which the Bill is constructed is that they shall be at liberty to reside where they will, it being the well-known habit of almost everybody in the City of London to reside out of London and in the suburbs'.⁴⁶ If Parliament frustrated the Corporation's ambitions to include the financial and banking interests of the City, what more could they do? Some members of the Corporation, however, had resisted this approach and continued to do so. In 1851 Common Councillor Bennoch had argued against Aldermanic power and their election for life. In 1852 Common Councillor W.A. Rose (1820-1881) protested against the behaviour of the Court to the 'poor two-penny half-penny tradesmen, whilst ignoring the great merchants and bankers'. Common Councillor Norris warmed to the same theme in 1853, complaining that the wholesale dealers were allowed to escape, while 'the poor were persecuted and driven from their houses and homes', and in 1856 Common Councillor Barkley called for the total abolition of the Court of Aldermen and, in the wake of the recent establishment of the Metropolitan Board of Works the previous year, to make the case for London wide government.⁴⁷ Despite these criticisms, the Corporation resisted the fairly weak conclusions of the Commission, and, for the most part, dismissed the weaker Bill that was offered to Parliament

⁴⁵ 'The Corporation of London Killed by his Friends', *Illustrated London News*, 127, (11 February 1854); 'The Corporation of London: A dawn of Hope', *Illustrated London News*, 127, (18 March, 1854).

⁴⁶ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of City Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772), *Mins. Evid.*, Q. 5069.

⁴⁷ John Stewart, *Newspaper Cuttings, Pamphlets etc Relating to the Corporation Reform Bill 1856*. These views and others, were collected by an elected Common Councillor and are stored in the Guildhall Library.

in 1856.⁴⁸ Now routinely accused by progressives such as J.S. Mill, of 'jobbery and antiquated foppery', the Corporation's case looks, from a distance, more like a fairly feeble attempt to prevent the undoing of the shopocracy so carefully shaped by Pearson and others. Some members of the communality did not feel inclined to stand in their way. Thus, responses to these proposed reforms, like City opinion generally, were far from monolithic or uniform. Some commentators thought the attempted reform of the Corporation was of national importance both because it increased ministerial power by undermining local government, and because it threatened the rights of corporate and, by extension, individual property. Others, like the citizens gathered in the wardmote of Farringdon Without, still argued for the inclusion of rated householders into the municipal franchise, adding equally sized wards to a list of demands.

If, by the mid-1850s, as Toulmin believed, the integrity of the Corporation was being undermined by this time because of its political and constitutional position, and if Liberals attacked it on utilitarian, rationalist and economic grounds, it was largely because the glue of communality was becoming unstuck. Certainly most of the witnesses that addressed the Commission professed that if they had once lived in the City they no longer did so. If this was true it had to be balanced by competing forms of belonging that tied them to the City. Their connections with the square mile extended to the businesses they kept and the clubs and associations they attended. In any case, some like Alderman Dakin (1808-1889) protested, with some justice, that their businesses were not without note or importance.⁴⁹ A simple glance at occupation or residence would fail to take account of those who, for example, had wider business interests or some in the upper echelons of

⁴⁸ 'The Government of London' *Westminster Review*, 105, (January 1876), pp. 93-123, listed the suggestions made in the final report: 1. A new charter for the Corporation; 2. Election of the Lord Mayor by Common Council; 3. Aldermen to be elected for three years; 4. Appointment of stipendiary magistrates; 5. Abolition of the Court of Aldermen; 6. reduction of wards to not less than twelve, or not more than sixteen; 7. Each ward to return one Alderman and five Councillors; 8. Extension of franchise; 9. Election by Common Hall to be abolished; 10. Election of Sheriff by Common Council; 11. Incorporation of City with Metropolitan Police; 12. Transfer of Conservancy of Thames; 13. Abolition of exclusive privileges of fellowship of porters, and of watermen and lightermen; 14. Consolidation of accounts; 15. Extension of Municipal Reform Act in parts of the City; 16. Dissolution of the Irish Society, and transfer to trusts to be created by Parliament. See, G.L. (Mans) Ms. 51 Vol. 2-7 *Wardmote Minutes Billingsgate, Thursday 17 April 1856*; G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5644 Vol. 2 *Wardmote Minutes Castle Baynard, Thursday 17 April 1856*.

⁴⁹ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids*, Q. 7376.

finance and banking, who were Members of Parliament or magistrates, or held high positions in a pressure group.⁵⁰

The rift between the 'parliament of shopkeepers' and the richer banker and merchant was only true inasmuch as the social pool of those entering City politics had become shallower because of the constitutional changes evolved by the Corporation. The 'gold-finders' and 'money-getters' to whom Toulmin referred were, as he predicted, claiming all the 'rights and privileges' of the City but fulfilling few of its duties. Lord Mayor Salomans (1797-1873) said as much and suggested that amongst this number 'there is an undue desire to enrich themselves by their own respective callings, and not to perform those duties of citizens which the ancient charters of London require all its citizens to perform'. 'There is no dishonour', he went on, 'in men giving their time to the public welfare - if there is dishonour, it attaches to those parties who seek to enrich themselves rather than study the public weal, and the part they ought to play as citizens of the community'.⁵¹ Thus the problems of lack of representation and charges of corruption persisted. The financial City, still for the reasons glossed by Solomans, was feeling even less inclined to identify itself closely with the Corporation. Indeed, by retaining an absurd range of regulatory powers, the City's local authority invited both ridicule and contempt, particularly as they largely existed to raise revenues in order to keep the City Corporation flowing in champagne and turtle soup. The Corporation retained the right to raise a coal tax on entry to London, powers of metage via the Fellowship of Porters, and limited fines and duties that could be imposed on brokers on entry to the Stock Exchange. Whereas the City Corporation would defend these means of regulating the financial City as 'rights and privileges', the financial City recognised that they were the means of maintaining a monopoly:

its tolls and dues are taxes upon the public, oppressive both in amount and in the mode of their collection. Its monopolies are the relics of a more barbarous age, serving only to hamper trade and raise prices. Its supervision of commercial affairs is a mere pretext for taxation, without being effectual for any purpose. And what is there on the other side? What has the wealthy Corporation ever done to promote the commerce of the City that it professes to rule?⁵²

⁵⁰ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids*, Q.8480-8484; See Appendix Three

⁵¹ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids*, Q.7147.

⁵² 'The Decline and Fall of the Corporation' *Fraser's Magazine*, 50, January-May, (1854), p.571.

One way of bridging this gap was for the Corporation to act as a central monitoring body, a kind of ermine-clad Chamber of Commerce.⁵³ Clearly, compulsion was no longer possible in attempting either to bring people into the Freedom of the City, or to police its antiquated qualifications of citizenship. The only option left was to redefine what it meant to be a member of the communality, and this process Charles Pearson had begun with his efforts towards retrenchment and the creation of a shopocracy, and Benjamin Scott continued with the championing of the property interest. It was at this moment that the City truly passed from radicalism to a nascent Liberal-Conservatism.

(iii)

Benjamin Scott, the third contributor to *The Citizen* newspaper at the time of the Chartist uprising in 1848, was Chamberlain of the Corporation from 1858 and like many other officers defended the City's battlements from frequent accusations of corruption and unrepresentativeness (Appendix Four). He was familiar with both criticisms as even in 1831, before the Reform Act, Scott had made his first bid for the office of Chamberlain against Alderman Sir John Key (1794-1858). According to Key this contest cost him £5,000.⁵⁴ This was an exceptional amount of money, but not in the context of election of the City's officers and elected members. It was, according to witnesses to the Commission, a matter of practice and notoriety that 'if you go into the committee room of a candidate you can ascertain what the market price of your vote is, whether it be half a crown or whether it be ten shillings, and you can get it and take it'. Other witnesses testified that a bribe could rise to as much as two guineas, as it did when the butchers of Newgate Market were invited to enter a particularly close contest on the side of one of the candidates. Less conspicuously, much of this expenditure was used for 'defraying expenses'. A voter, for instance, would expect to be paid to travel to the poll, and would also expect 'a glass of wine as a refreshment' when he arrived.⁵⁵ In the City, this practice was dressed up in communitarian clothing. It was neighbourly when appealing to the 'friendship' of your 'Brother Electors' to return the

⁵³ Benjamin Scott, *Suggestions for a London Chambers of Commerce for The City of London* (London, 1867).

⁵⁴ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) Min, Evids, Q. 5840.

⁵⁵ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) Min, Evids, Q. 317.

compliment over perhaps the week or so that the election took place. There were occasions, such as an Aldermanic election in Portsoken ward, when Alderman Francis Moon (1796-1871) was challenged by Alderman David Salomans and the resulting legal wranglings continued for well over seven months. There was even a hint that Corporation funds were utilised in favour of one candidate over another, and even, on other occasions, that the passage of bribery and corruption from many sources had been eased by the lack of a reliable list of those entitled to vote. The accumulative result was that there were some conspiracies to defraud the poll, and sometimes there were mistakes in recording the votes correctly.

This was one type of corruption. Another was the manipulation of public opinion by the City authorities, and the secrecy employed in order to cover their tracks. A red-faced Benjamin Scott felt obliged to correct evidence already given to the Commission on the matter of the City's opposition to the parliamentary Bill designed to move Smithfield Market from its current site. Having previously denied the existence of a secret fund, 'of that name', kept by the Corporation, Scott admitted that 'expenditure of a confidential nature had taken place with respect to opposing or promoting Bills in Parliament where the City's interests are materially concerned'.⁵⁶ Many of these confidential funds appeared as 'disbursements', making the Corporation's accounts, then and now, quite opaque. However, it is clearer where the monies were directed. In this case the Market's Improvement Committee had instructed the Remembrancer 'to take measures by obtaining petitions and expressions of public opinion'. Put simply, this meant that the officer responsible for parliamentary affairs was instructed to orchestrate public opinion on the Corporation's behalf, sub-contracting, on this occasion, the dirty work to Mr Acland the Secretary of the 'Central Markets Association', who in turn, paid money to newspapers in order to secure a favourable press for the Corporation's point of view. According to some members of the Committee this was a legitimate defence of the City Corporation's 'rights and privileges'. Other Common Councillors complained that it was a policy that remained 'private and confidential' even to them, although most newspapers, except *The Times*, responded favourably to the pressure applied.⁵⁷ This was not the last time the Corporation would

⁵⁶ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids.*, Q. 4661.

⁵⁷ (PP) *Royal Commission on State of the Corporation, 1854*, xxvi (1772) *Min, Evids.*, Q. 4661; Q. 7809-7814; Q. 1226-1234.

use journalists in this way or to seek to manipulate public opinion.⁵⁸ Although accusations directed towards an Alderman who was still sitting were rare, they were not unheard of.⁵⁹ More common were general charges of members dining on the proceeds of bloated charitable trusts.⁶⁰ Indeed, it is not an exaggeration to say that the picture of cocked hatted dignitaries, eating with their social betters on the proceeds of money intended for their social inferiors, made up the popular image of the City's representatives at this time. According to Toulmin, this had been a wholly predictable state of affairs, especially as the franchise was now based on the passive rights of property, not the responsibilities of active citizenship.

Although clearly differing intellectually on the proper foundation of citizenship, many of the Ratepayers' Associations established in the 1860s shared much of the older language of the departed radical City but were located firmly in the Liberal camp. Aldgate Ward Ratepayers' Association, for instance, had as its motto 'open to all'. The Bishopsgate Ward Ratepayers' Association, inaugurated in December 1857 after the abolition of the Inquest Committees, welcomed 'members unlimited' and stated the objects of the Association to be the 'principle of Union', to improve the 'social status of the ward' and to 'carry out the principles of a Mutual Improvement Society', as well as pledging to 'assist in returning fit and proper persons to represent interests in local government'. Ratepayers then, had formed themselves into special-interest

⁵⁸ (PP) *Report from the Select Committee on London Corporation (Charges of Malversation), 1887*, x (161). On this occasion, the Conservative agent at Finsbury, was employed by the Corporation to oppose the Municipal Reform Bill. In turn, a journalist Mr Johnson was hired to set up a bogus 'Metropolitan Ratepayers Protection Association'. Its account was kept at a bank owned by the leader of the City Conservatives, Alderman Fowler MP, and in the branch where his parliamentary constituency was located. Under this guise, soldiers from the Royal Militia (the clerk to the Chamberlain, Mr T. D. Sewell was the senior Captain of that regiment) were hired to break up the meetings of the 'Municipal Reform League'. Forged tickets for these events were eventually traced to the office of Mr Palmer and the Chamberlain, Benjamin Scott. Mr Scott on questioning by Bradlaugh said: 'On behalf of the Mayor, the Communal, and Citizens of the City of London, I am directed to respectfully protest against the demand made for the production of the books of account of the Corporation of their own Corporate estate, as being in excess of the powers vested in the House of Commons, and in derogation of the ancient rights and privileges of the Livery of London'. The case of malversation was not proved.

⁵⁹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 2843 Vol.1 *Wardmote Minutes of Vintry, 30 June 1857*. In the 1890s Alderman Smallman was in dispute with Alderman Whitehead over some alleged irregularities in the issue of shares for the General Phosphate Corporation Limited.

⁶⁰ Arthur Arnold, *Social Politics* (London, 1878). The author described 'the destruction of the wretched lanes and courts, the fever-nests of the City, as a matter for congratulation'. The problem with the City was its use of 'misdirected, misapplied charities'. The solution was, 'Light and air; public control; popular election; public audit; the training and transfer of endowments from obsolete to beneficial ones; the kindly operation of public intelligence upon public affairs; - that is the cure for all that is wrong with the City'.

associations and had begun to argue for the extension of the Freedom to the male £10 householder. A Special General Meeting of the Bishopsgate Ratepayers' Association added the 'protection of the ballot', equal constituencies and three-year parliaments to their list of demands. Various claiming for themselves social as well as political identities, they were largely peopled, though not invariably, by City Liberals. The same organisation boasted George J. Goschen MP (1831-1907) as President, and Lionel N. Rothschild, MP (1808-1879), Robert Wigham Crawford MP, and Alderman William Lawrence MP (-1897) as vice-presidents. Politically, the association noted the death of Richard Cobden in 1865, sending a letter of condolence to his widow and family, and in the following year, it sent a representative to the Conference of Liberals in Manchester.⁶¹ In 1869 a speaker was invited to address the meeting on both working-class housing, and 'Free Labour versus Trade Unions'. The latter, it was decided, was 'prejudiced to the interests of the working classes generally, by impeding the free progress of trade'. With the usual concerns of the ratepayer they, although careful not to overstate it, were keen to galvanise, and hold accountable, their respective Common Councilmen and Alderman in the defence of cheap gas and clean water, and in resistance to encroaching railways. Bishopsgate ward, in particular, was anxious to reach out to other similar organisations, seeking co-operation from Bassishaw, Coleman Street, Aldgate and Cripplegate Ratepayers' Associations, as well as other City clubs and associations.⁶² Dealing with the mundane business of services to the ward, charitable concerns and the like, they also engaged in a long battle to extend the ratepayers' influence into the select vestries, the very source of Toulmin's model of local self-government. This strategy of mainly focusing on 'social intercourse' seemed to work as it was reported at the Summer Dinner, held at Crystal Palace in August 1867, that its membership had grown in three years, from twenty to 120.

In this year of reform, Toulmin's residence for a full year and a day as a test of citizenship finally, and completely, gave way to the property qualification. The 1849 Election Act, although conferring the municipal franchise on rated properties of £10 upwards, nevertheless limited it to those Free of the City. The City of London Municipal Elections Amendment Act (1867) allowed

⁶¹ G.L. (Mans), Ms. 21,144, Vol. 1, *Bishopsgate Ratepayers' Association, Executive Committee Meeting, Wednesday 12 April 1865; Bishopsgate Ratepayers' Association, General Meeting, Thursday 11 October 1866.*

⁶² G.L. (Mans), Ms. 21,144, Vol.2, *Bishopsgate Ratepayers Association, General Meeting, 11 December 1871.*

anyone, such as members of the Livery Companies, who appeared on the parliamentary register, also to vote in ward elections. The result was an increase in the constituency of approximately 6,000 people and the removal of the seven-mile limit on residence. Thus, very many of the mercantile and commercial classes, by now living in the suburbs, were included on the list of voters. If the 1849 legislation, which had introduced the rate-paying principle into the Freedom proved to be the death of the radical City, the 1867 statute provided the burial.

The communality after this moment took on another shape. Wardmotes and Ratepayers' Associations merged in both the type of people in attendance and the functions they performed. Much, however, at least on the surface, remained unaltered. The 'independence' of friends and 'Brother Electors' were still a critical test of citizenship and suitability for elected office. Like the old Inquest Committees, public service was given in the Ratepayers' Committees, and political spurs won. Indeed, when the Cripplegate Ratepayers' Association recorded its last minutes, 'due to indifference of feeling', early in 1871, the Secretary added in his own handwriting, and with some bitterness, that 'the Association and its services to the ratepayers' were quickly dropped even by those who had made it a source of political power'.⁶³ This was odd, since at its inception it had professed to be formed for social reasons, refusing to be attached to any religious or political grouping.

Clearly, the aspirations of at least one editor of *The Citizen* had not been met. The communality of the City of London Corporation had metamorphosed in a way that might have been feared, but could not have been readily foreseen. The influence of the wardmote, let alone the parish and the vestry, had perceptibly dwindled and the 'union of the interests and energies of all' had been replaced by the special and excluding rights of the property qualification. Moreover, by the 1870s, Liberal opinion went further and argued that: 'The jealousy of centralisation is passing rapidly away, and the better opinion is gaining ground, that local self-government will be quite as real, and much more efficient and respectable, when it embraces much larger areas than the present Parishes'.⁶⁴ This, of course, cleared the way for a normative Liberalism to embrace arguments for the absorption of the City into a greater London authority. The result, in terms of the Corporation's administrative structures was, as Toulmin had warned, that 'though the name may

⁶³ G.L. (Mans), Ms. 1022, *Cripplegate Ratepayers Association*, circa, April 1871.

⁶⁴ Thomas Hughes, 'The Anarchy of London', *Macmillans Magazine*, 22 January 1870, pp. 273-278.

abide, the reality will be gone, and the *form* [my italics] be but a mockery and a snare, and the surest means of securing oligarchic sway'.⁶⁵ If public opinion did not spring from the bottom, as it were, it would - like the manipulation of public opinion by the Corporation - be represented from on high. Liberalism, by 1867, was part of this complex and by its redefinition of its constituency, first the creation of Pearson's shopocracy and then the promotion of the property franchise by Scott, was implicated in a deliberate, coherent and enduring strategy. The oligarchy of Toulmin's description, now dominant, was concerned with those who sought 'selfish gratification' in the pursuit of material advantage. This was in contrast to the stake that the individual had formally in the framework of the rights, obligations and 'kindly feelings' of the civic society of Toulmin's description. Humankind, as thinking and 'progressive beings [were] for something better than to be driven hither and thither as a herd of animals. for something more than [to be] mere material machines'.⁶⁶ This was Toulmin's rage against *Gesellschaft*, the encroaching financial City and, in equal part too, against the Liberals now ascendant in the City's Ratepayers' Associations.

From the perspective of the City as a whole, looking back across the river towards Chartism's dispersing crowds, there must have been a feeling of relief. Not just that life and property had been saved, but that a community had prospered under duress. To *The Citizen*, the City was a precious survival from a world being lost to centralising forces, an industrial age and in the Durkheimian sense, a mechanical one too. This is why its pages overflowed, not just with relief, but also with pride:

In no portion of the Metropolis, was a more glorious spectacle exhibited, as on the 10th April, than within her loyal City of London, when the greatest merchant and his humblest dependent stood together with unexampled firmness and unanimity, prepared, at any hazard, to breast the rising tides of anarchy and disorder.⁶⁷

Toulmin had argued that the kind of mutuality displayed on 10 April 1848 relied upon the links of local solidarities, reinforced in local structures but which reached across other solidarities. It could not be sustained by the domination of one interest over another, whether it be shopkeeper or

⁶⁵ J. Toulmin Smith, '*Local Self-Government*', p. 52.

⁶⁶ J. Toulmin Smith, '*Local Self-Government*', p. 53.

⁶⁷ *The Citizen*, Saturday, 13 January 1849.

capitalist. For Toulmin the vision of a future became a defence of the past. For example, like Alderman John Pirie (1781-1851), he understood that common good lay in mutual sympathy and dependence on each other. To observe that one was a Conservative and the other a radical, misses the point. Both focused their energies around ideas of rights and duties as well as public service, although for the latter its extension to all strengthened the principle, and to the former it threatened it. What else, according to Toulmin, was the communality, if not universal? It had, by definition, to reach across classes and occupations. Rights had to be extended to all those who consented to live in a moral community and who undertook to fulfil its accompanying duties. To limit these rights and responsibilities to an exclusive coterie chosen by a property test was indeed to adopt an oligarchy. After 1849, the introduction of a property qualification into the Freedom eventually increased its number, but limited its plurality. Notwithstanding, even if it excluded a body of the citizenry, Scott spent all his professional life defending the Corporation from reformers in a language that, in reality, had lost real meaning. Rights and privileges had become bywords for oligarchy, honest adjudication of goods and services for monopoly, and mutuality for back-scratching. The fading of the old citizenship had left the poor with no rights and the rich with no duties, and the mantle of complete citizenship had passed from the occupier to the property owner. The appearance of civic and religious freedom may have survived, but its deeper meaning had, like much of its population, departed.

The City in its entirety, nonetheless, was seen not only as the cradle of all our great establishments, as Lord Brougham would have it, but also the home of openness, honesty and independence.⁶⁸ The Lord Mayor was thought by contemporary opinion to be 'the immediate impersonation of its commercial spirit and integrity, the fitting guardian of commercial honour'.⁶⁹ Similarly, the City Corporation's bequest of 'gifts to the nation', Epping Forest, Burnham Beeches and the like, reinforced its position as a national institution: a conceit that, as we shall see in the next chapter, was thought to place it (alongside the City's Livery Companies) firmly against collectivism of any kind. By taking this stance, however, the City had betrayed at least one of its stout defenders on that wet Spring day in 1848.

⁶⁸ A.B. Beaven, *The Aldermen of the City of London* (London, 1908). It is interesting to note that Beaven does not list the political allegiances of the Aldermen after 1837, considering it immaterial.

⁶⁹ Horace Williams, *Six Letters on Corporation Reform by a Citizen - Reprinted from the 'Morning Advertiser'* (London, 1882).

Chapter Three

The Livery Companies, Technical Education and the 'Great Awakening' ¹

Lujo Brentano, a respected and influential German historian, argued in a book edited by Toulmin and published after his death, that the modern Livery Companies were no longer free 'unions between man and man' but were simply 'associations of capital'. ² Although they were successors of the ancient guilds they were not, in terms of principle, their descendants. This role, he went on, fell to the relatively infant trade unions. Like the rise of religious or social guilds, town guilds or guild merchants and latterly craft guilds, each represented 'stages of civilisation' which 'always rose in times of transition'. If the family was the first guild, class organisation was the last.

This evolutionist interpretation of change over a long period has not always enjoyed the support of more recent scholars. ³ What is noticeable, however, is that medieval craft association appears to have bequeathed a language and appearance to both the late nineteenth century Livery Company and its trade union counterpart that was, essentially, shared. ⁴ Both placed an emphasis on 'mutual aid', 'brotherhood', 'friendship', 'honour' and 'standards within the craft' and the 'promotion of justice'. ⁵ Indeed, as Brentano put it, 'the cement which holds their members together is the feeling of solidarity, the esteem for each other as men, the honour and virtue of the association and the faith in them - not as arithmetical rule of probabilities, indifferent to all good and bad personal qualities. The support which the community affords a member is adjusted according to his wants - not according to his money-stake, or to a jealous debtor and creditor account; and in like

¹ F. W. Law, *The Worshipful Company of Spectacle Makers'. A History* (London, 1979) p. 50.

² Lujo Brentano, 'On the History and Development of Guilds and the Origin of Trade Unions' in Toulmin Smith (ed.) *English Guilds* (London, 1870). Before this, the point of reference was William Herbert, *The History of the Twelve Great Livery Companies of London* (London, 1834).

³ William F. Kahl, *The Development of London Livery Companies* (Harvard, 1960); Valerie Hope, *The Freedom - The Past and Present of the Livery, Guilds and City of London* (London, 1981).

⁴ This was also observed by Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London, Ruskin College, Oxford Edition, 1911)

⁵ Antony Black, *Guilds and Civil Society in European Political Thought from Twelfth Century to the Present* (London, 1984).

manner the contributions of the members vary according to the wants of the society'.⁶ Particularly as both were protectionist in essence, zealous in the pursuit of their members interests, and dedicated to what liberal economists saw as the restraint of trade, the City Companies and the trade unions far from standing apart from each other, historically, had much in common.⁷

Yet Antony Black views their development as twin tracked, and like City Liberalism, as essentially divided. On the one rail the Livery Companies travelled as members of civil society. Once they had come together as religious and social confraternities: they made a contract with each other that was not based on status but on shared interest. Legal rights assured that private property was not liable to arbitrary seizure. The individual was free from the domination and 'passion' of others and free to exchange goods, services and opinions within the marketplace. In short, self-interest was placed at the disposal of the commonweal.⁸ These rational Hobbesian organisations were rule bound, dependent upon the management of power, while combining to secure a monopoly interest.⁹ Balancing on the opposite track to this vehicle (and barely staying on the rails on particularly fast historical corners) is the collectivist carriage. The freight here, according to Black's account, is not the ownership of property and person, legal equality and individual diversity, but 'counter-schemes for [the] redistribution of wealth, the abolition of private ownership, greater social conformity and a tightly-knit, warm, charismatic community, *Gemeinschaft* or fraternity: 'Collectivism' has, from the fourteenth century onwards, provided the counter-culture to civil society, to which it poses a constantly unsettling threat'.¹⁰ Unlike the 'milieu moral' of civil society, collectivism insists that self-interest must co-exist not only with duty, but also with rights. In the search for the perfect balance between liberty and equality as conditions of citizenship,

⁶ Lujo Brentano, *'On the History and Development of Gilds'*, p. lxxx.

⁷ Cornelius Walford, *Gilds: their Origin, Constitution, Objects and later History* (London, 1888) p. 261; 'There seems but little doubt that in any revival of the old system of Gilds the religious element will assert itself more and more strongly, as in their secular aspects Gilds have been so largely superseded by the modern trades' union'.

⁸ Antony Black, *'Guilds and Civil Society'*, p.159; 'Rational maximisation promotes economic growth and plenty; although men compete, their long-term interests need not conflict'.

⁹ In the European context, the abolition of trade privileges occurred in France after the Revolution in 1891; soon after in occupied Belgium and Holland under French rule; 1833-40 in Spain and Portugal; 1859-60 in Austria and Germany; and 1864 in Italy. In contrast, the English Guild system was at an end by the beginning of the eighteenth century.

¹⁰ Antony Black, *'Guilds and Civil Society'*, p. 43.

however, the 'independence and order' of which Brentano spoke, could only be achieved by compulsion. Rousseau's puzzle, how to achieve this balance without coercion, has often been worked out by the use of violence and the oppression of the individual, as we have found to our cost in the twentieth century.

It may be, though, that alternative forms of community or solidarity accompanied the 'associations of capital' represented by the Livery Companies in this period. The ties of blood or family, for example, were still strong in the guilds, as they were in the Corporation. With many Aldermen, officers and Liverymen related to each other, charges of nepotism were not uncommon. (Appendix Three) Indeed in 1852 a motion opposing its corrosive influence in the Corporation was moved by Common Councillor T.H. Hall, and was, without a hint of embarrassment, seconded by T.H. Hall. The source of this problem undoubtedly originated in the Halls of the Livery Companies. In 1880 the number of members of the Haberdashers' who received their admission through inheritance from their fathers formed a large percentage of the total. In addition the Mercers' governing body was thought to have been dominated by a small number of families.¹¹ The solidarity of neighbourhood or locality in the City, as we have seen in the previous chapter with the reduced population and the declining importance of the wardmote, was dissolving rapidly. The shared links at work, however, suggest a social bonding that was a result of the increasing prevalence of financial institutions within the City by the 1860s and 1870s, plus the advanced industrialisation of the economy. Hereafter, in the Livery Companies, merchants and bankers passed as say Basketmakers' and Cordwainers' and in trade societies and unions, sociability and self-interest fed directly into modern production, with all of its conflicts.

By the new century, therefore, the differences between Liverymen and Trade Unionists appeared greater than their similarities. The change, or so George Unwin argued, was the

¹¹ (PP) *Report and Memoranda, and Oral Inquiry, City of London Livery Companies' Royal Commission (hereafter Livery Companies Commission) 1884 xxxlx, Vol. 1-5; p. 250; 'We have observed too, that admission by patrimony produces a natural effect on the constitution of the Liveries and on that of the Courts. Where a family continues prosperous from generation to generation, it acquires a position of considerable importance on the Court and Livery of the Company. A remarkable instance is that of the Mercers' Company, the Court of which is recruited from a Livery of ninety-seven on which certain families are represented by as many as nine or ten members'; Ian W. Archer, *The History of the Haberdashers' Company* (London, 1991), p.164. 'Between 1870 and 1879 only an average of 18.9% persons were admitted per year. In 1880 the Company had 657 members - 70% were members of the Livery - although 24.7% of the total membership addresses were unknown, 18.7% of the Livery were described as 'poor' and were 22.4% of the total number'.*

relationship of the Livery Companies with the state. Unwin, building upon earlier German scholarship and taking as his starting point the work of Brentano nearly forty years earlier, saw the guilds not as 'associations of capital' but as 'organ[s] of social progress'.¹² Now placed resolutely in civil society, they were the foundation of what he called the 'three great essentials to a free national constitution'. Firstly, there was a sense of professional responsibility by the judicial and administrative civil servants of the state. Secondly, he cited the role of independent local government structures that he saw as the basis of parliamentary liberties. Thirdly, he emphasised the capacity of voluntary associations - Unwin includes political parties in this category - to determine the direction of the state:

The political liberty of Western Europe has been secured by the building of a system of voluntary organisations, strong enough to control the state, and yet flexible enough to be constantly remoulded by the free forces of change. It is hardly too much to say that the foundations of this system were laid in the gild. It was in the gild that voluntary association first came into a permanent relation with political power.¹³

This relationship was indeed historically close. By the 1870s, however, the guilds were feasting from the proceeds of inflated corporate wealth and flabby charitable trusts and, for the most part, no longer maintained their regulatory links with their respective trades. Consequently, the Livery Companies had to renew themselves in order to survive in a Gladstonian political universe that questioned their utility. The result, or so commentators tell us, was that the Companies were forced to awaken from their inactive slumber and to create a national system of technical education. Therefore, when the Royal Commission on the Livery Companies rose to report their findings in the mid-1880s, the guilds had already found a function for themselves.

¹² George Unwin, *The Gilds and Companies of London* (London, 1908) .

¹³ George Unwin, '*Gilds and Companies of London*', p. 13. It appears naive in the extreme to imagine that civil society can direct the state. More likely that associations enjoy freedom by permission, tacit or otherwise, or by licence.

It is the purpose of this chapter to argue that the notion that the guilds simply responded to a threatening political situation, does not by itself fully explain the post 1880s description of the guilds as 'organs of social progress', especially when we consider their moribund condition between the late 1830s and 1860s. It is all the more surprising that, to some, the Companies had become interwoven with the glories and continuities of an imagined national past.¹⁴ Indeed, by the end of the period in question they acted as well-endowed bulwarks against the practical pressures and ideals of mass democracy. They not only served to illustrate the supposed opposites of civil society and collectivism, but also fostered a servile historiography to champion their case.¹⁵ The clue to this transformation is hidden, as Unwin rightly observed, in their changing attitudes to the state and the attitude of the state towards them.

The 1830s marked the beginning of a decline in membership and activity in most of the individual Livery Companies. Some, like the largest guilds, were better placed to survive a stagnant spell than those that remained.¹⁶ Although corporate wealth rose dramatically over the period - they were estimated to be worth £800,000 annually and the capital receipts were thought to amount to £15 million - many of the smaller guilds still met in coffee shops, hotels, above taverns or even in the homes of senior Liverymen.¹⁷ The thirty-four ancient Halls, or 'Shrines of Gluttony' as critics called them, were often in disrepair; and more often jerry-built after the Great Fire, lacking either solid construction or, on occasions, architectural worth.¹⁸ The fire in 1666, where charitable trust

¹⁴ Stella Kramer, *The English Craft Gilds and the Government - An Examination of the Accepted Theory Regarding the Decay of the Craft Gilds* (New York, 1905).

¹⁵ G. D. Ramsey, 'Victorian Historiography and the Guilds of London: The Report of the Royal Commission on the Livery Companies of London, 1884', *London Journal* 10, 2, (1984), pp. 155-166.

¹⁶ (PP) 'Livery Companies' Commission', p. 24. Some of the minor Companies, however, as this report shows, were in point of numbers and wealth equal to the less opulent of the great companies. See, for example the Armourers', Carpenters', Leathersellers', and Saddlers' Companies.

¹⁷ The Spectaclemakers', Loriners' and Fanmakers' so lacked funds that they were managed by Mr Sewell, from Guildhall. In 1877 there was a proposal to create a Central Hall for those Livery Companies' without a Hall of their own.

¹⁸ The Founders' Company built a new Hall in July 1854. Their old premises at Lothbury was taken over by the Central Electric Telegraph Company. See William Meade Williams, *Annals of the Founders' Company* (London, 1867).

fund documents were fortuitously lost, proved to be ruinous at the time but convenient by the nineteenth century when their terms and conditions were 'improvised'. The Reformation, which stripped the guilds of a religious function left them bare to charges that they were just giant dining clubs, dedicated to 'gross belly-worship', feeding on the proceeds of money and invested wealth (such as extensive property in the City and a wider London) that were meant for nobler causes.¹⁹ The Plantation of Ulster at the beginning of the seventeenth century had also added to the wealth of the City Companies, and was managed by a committee of the guilds and the Common Council called the Irish Society.²⁰

Although the guild system had largely disappeared, the hierarchical structure between the 'Great' and 'Lesser' Livery Companies remained. Hierarchy also prospered within the Livery Companies themselves. Essentially, when a member became free of the guild either by apprenticeship (of the trade), patrimony (inheritance from the father), or redemption (payment), he - they were usually men - waited election to the governing body, the Court of Assistants. Only then, and perhaps after a number of years, were they eligible to take up the posts of Clerk, Junior Warden, Renter Warden, Upper Warden and Master Warden. So-called 'Quarterage' fees were paid to the Company and, according to critics, could be as little as three guineas and as much as £400. In return, it was thought that some £100,000 was spent on entertainments and £175,000 on 'maintenance', which included £40,000 spent on Assistants attending the scheduled monthly meetings of the Court.²¹ In fact, it was a favourite charge of Liberal critics that after feasting, the ordinary member could expect to find a £5 note secreted under his plate. This may have been true, or alternatively it may have been the bourgeois equivalent of the 'clever pauper' myth, or rumour of the workhouse piano.²² In either case, their activities were far from transparent, with the deliberations of the Court of Assistants, whose numbers reached 1,500, kept positively hidden from

¹⁹ 'The Trade Guilds of the City of London' *Fraser's Magazine* (April), x1,xcx11,(1879), pp. 396-405. Estimates of the corporate wealth of the Companies' were as hard to ascertain then, as now. The extent of the gross rental of property owned within, let alone outside the City of London was thought to be 'a trifle over £500,000, and the rateable value between £450,000 and £470,000.

²⁰ An important body in its own right, it remains nevertheless outside the orbit of this study.

²¹ (PP) 'Livery Companies' Commission, *Report and Appendix*.

²² The evidence for this practice appears to be slight. Firth attributes this fact to a member of the Cutlers', Mr John Pryor, also a member of Lloyd's and the Society of Friend's. See G.L. (Mans) Ms. 21, 998/1-111, *Prideaux Papers*.

the total membership that was estimated to be 17,300 by the 1880s.²³ They claimed to be separate from the City Corporation, retaining the power to come together annually in Common Hall to elect the Lord Mayor, his Sheriffs and all the major officers. Crucially their members exercised the parliamentary franchise if they lived within twenty-five miles of the City. Once introduced to a Livery Company, the supporters of the various parties, began the process of recruiting them on to the franchise list. This process was known by contemporaries as the 'manufacturing' of votes. As the membership of the Liveries was restricted, some Livery Companies applied to the Court of Aldermen during the 1870s in order to expand their numbers. The participants of Common Hall had not always had their mouths stuffed with gold. Independent voices such as Henry Hunt, although at one point elected as an Auditor, were vocal in the radical cause in the 1830s. Elected to the Livery in 1815, he joined figures such as Robert Waithman and Matthew Wood in a radical Common Hall and like them turned the Livery Companies into a focus, alongside Westminster, for the reforming cause.²⁴

By the 1840s, however, the Companies were often dormant.²⁵ Some guilds, like the Basketmakers', saw little or no business transacted between 1835 and 1873, and no members admitted between January 1846 and March 1874.²⁶ One commentator and critic recalled in 1865 the decayed state of most of the City Companies: 'The Liverymen, mostly aged men, are dying off fast, and but few sons of old members, or, thoughtful citizens, deem it worth their while to fill up the ranks'.²⁷ Meeting at the borrowed premises of the Parish Clerks' Hall on 26 October 1873 the

²³ *Quarterly Review*, 159, 317, (1885), p. 56. 'The Courts of Assistants vary in number in different Companies from twelve to thirty or forty members. The aggregate of all the Courts is about 1500. There are altogether 7,319 Liverymen (including the 1500 members of the Courts). The Freemen are computed by the Commissioners to be 10,000 [Alderman Cotton's estimate was 13,000] in number. The total number of individuals with vested rights in the Companies is, according to this calculation, about 17,300'.

²⁴ Iorwerth Prothero, *Artisans and Politics in Early Nineteenth-Century London* (Folkestone, 1979).

²⁵ I. G. Doolittle, *The City of London and its Livery Companies* (London, 1982), p. 91.

²⁶ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5735/5 *Minutes of the Glaziers' Company, Meeting at the London Coffee House, 25 January 1861*. Despite, or perhaps because of this level of inactivity, the Glaziers' Company summoned Mr James Goodchild to take up the Office of Renter Warden. When he refused the summons he was fined £20.

²⁷ John Robert Taylor, *Registered Residential Manhood Suffrage and the Ballot - In a Series of Letters Addressed to the Public Press* (London, 1865, second edition). Taylor argued that the Common Hall should be thrown open to the inhabitant householders of the City. Interestingly, he remembers in his acknowledgements a host of Liberal Common Councillors as well as Alderman Lusk, 'that staunch supporter of the Ballot and firm advocate of a wide extension of the suffrage'. Lusk, like many others in the City, later became a Liberal Unionist.

following statement was recorded by the senior Warden and Treasurer, Edward White, the only surviving member of the Court of Basketmakers':

In the year I presented the Livery of this Company to my two sons, viz. 1872 after much consideration for several years it appeared to me of much importance that being an ancient Company and also having obtained the Livery in the year 1825 by the exertions of my then colleagues and myself that every endeavour should be made to increase the number of the Livery and thus perpetuate by the best means in my power, the existence of the Company. ²⁸

After this date membership and activity grew expeditiously. Although it is difficult to provide a wholly typical example, what follows is the usual account of the so-called 'awakening' of the City's Livery Companies. Languishing and moribund, an expiring Company is brought back to life by the efforts of an individual, aware of the possibilities of the Livery Companies, and galvanised by Liberal threats to their survival. The practical response, it is argued, was the frantic promotion of technical education as a way of lending the guilds a national purpose.

The problem with this model is one of chronology. For example, the Gardeners' experienced a long period of ossification from 1843. During this time, although meetings were inquorate the Company was not woken by Liberal cries of reform. Indeed, it slept reasonably soundly until a meeting was called at Old Jewry Chambers on 29 December 1890, when a programme of co-operation was agreed with officials and leading Fellows of the Royal Horticultural Society. ²⁹ Likewise, prominent Liverymen came relatively late to the scene. Although George Norgate Hooper was elected to the Court of the Coachmakers' in September 1867, Sir Homewood Crawford of the Fanmakers' was not elected until 1877, John Jones of the Turners' until the 1880s and Earnest Arthur Ebblewhite of the Tinplateworkers' until April 1892 (although in this Company activity had intensified from 1868). ³⁰ Far from the Companies responding in concert, the tune on

²⁸ G. L. (Mans) Ms. 2871/3 *Minutes of the Basketmakers', Meeting at the Parish Clerk's Hall on Friday, 26 October 1873.*

²⁹ Melvyn Barnes, *Root and Branch - A History of the Worshipful Company of Gardeners' of London* (London, 1994), p. 47.

³⁰ Sir Homeward Crawford, besides being a major Conservative figure in his Livery Company, was the first President of N.A.L.G.O., now part of the UNISON Trade Union. For a comprehensive biographical note on Crawford see Alfred Arthur Sylvester, *The Corporation of the City of London and the First Twelve of the Great City Guilds* (London, 1897). Benjamin Scott attended the first meeting of the revived Glovers' Company in 1886.

their corporate lips was discordant. It is not until the supposed 'signal year' of 1876 that the sentiments and actions of the individual Companies were made collective by external attacks.³¹ Encouraged by the publication of J.F.B. Firth's *Municipal London* in 1876, it followed Gladstone's much quoted Greenwich speech in 1875, which reminded the Livery Companies of their duties towards trade. Both bolstered Liberalism's efforts to control the feasting and wayward charitable funds of the Companies, and both questioned the usefulness of the City Companies in the modern world. Unlike the City's own Ratepayers' Associations, they spoke for the wider London ratepayer interest. When in 1876 the MP for Gateshead, Walter H. James, asked for a return of the Livery Companies and the 'City Reform Association' was established, the time had come for the Companies to react. Certainly it was already acknowledged that, as John Robert Taylor put it, 'they should at once put their house in order, before the pruning knife of the state does it for them'. The finances were said to be in a 'deplorable state', membership represented a 'snug family party', excessive feasting betrayed an 'animal appetite', salaries paid to officers 'excessive' and the lists of those eligible to vote, 'out of date'.³² The President of the Reform Association, Danby Seymour MP, speaking at a meeting of the St Pancras Working Men's Club, wanted to know the answers to a number of questions. How rich are the Companies? Are they truly separate from the City Corporation? Are their property and trusts private or public, and if they are public are they available for municipal ends? Could reform benefit the cause of wider London government? These are important questions, he argued, as the City Companies were clearly influential bodies. Seymour estimated that at least 160 Members of Parliament were members of City guilds. He, and his fellow critics, were in no doubt that not only were the Corporation and the guilds interdependent, but that their influence was felt throughout the wider City:

³¹ F. E. Foden, *A History of Technical Examinations in England to 1918: with special reference to the examinations work of the City and Guilds of London Institute* (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Reading, 1961).

³² John Robert Taylor, *Behold, The Spoiler Cometh!, Reform Your City Guilds* (London, 1872). Taylor argued that Alderman Owden 'was elected out of his term because his uncle had bequeathed £6,000 to the Company. Interestingly, Taylor was a strong advocate for technical education. He was Honorary Secretary of the London Mechanics Institution and a member of the Executive Committee of the 'National Technical University and Trades 'Technical Educational Association'. Often dismissed as a crank, Taylor is more often accused of pursuing a selfish agenda. Certainly, he did not approve of the Innholders' Company he found himself in: 'One lawyer on the Court shouted, to the extent of his over-wrought lungs and anti-musical voice, 'Taylor, we don't want Technical Education: we want more wine! Which interruption was occasionally interchanged by another red-nosed Assistant, to Taylor, 'we don't want Technical Education: we want a song'! According to the *Beehive* Taylor was a committed tee-totaller.

the seat of power of the City of London is in the City Guilds, and that they must be enquired into, and their abuses specially exposed, before we can hope to attack with success the City itself. Cut off the Guilds, and the City is comparatively helpless. It becomes deprived, to a great degree, of the sinews of war.³³

In response to this declaration of hostilities the City established the 'City of London Guild Association', also in 1876, 'to promote unity of policy'. Chaired by the prominent City of London Conservative MP and Lord Mayor, Alderman Cotton (1822-1902), it raised money from the individual Livery Companies to cover its campaigning costs.³⁴ Although it would be difficult to prove orchestration, it coincided with the recruitment of many 'great' men and at least one 'great' woman into the Livery. For instance, the Turners' added Gladstone to their numbers in February 1876 after welcoming Baroness Bardett-Coutts (and the gift of Columbia Market to the City of London Corporation) four years earlier. Similarly, the Duke of Edinburgh became a Coachmaker in February 1873, along with the Prince of Wales as a Fishmonger and Haberdasher, the Dukes of Connaught, Edinburgh and Cambridge as Fishmongers', and Lord Beaconsfield, as a Merchant Taylor.³⁵ The City Corporation and its guilds were certainly not afraid of making aristocratic and noble alliances in order to defend their 'rights and privileges'. The *City Press* summed up the overall strategy: 'They must not forget that the deeper their branches of usefulness are sunk the more will they command public support, and the less likely will be the remote possibility of a perverse and wanton interference with any of the institutions of the City'.³⁶ Another way of promoting the same object was to step up efforts to patronise the technical education movement, hitherto afflicted with spasmodic growth and lethargy. Called to a meeting by the Mercers' at the Drapers' Hall in February 1877, the nine Companies that attended heard a proposition to combine their efforts in just this direction. In June, a meeting of the fourteen Companies prepared to participate was held at Mercers' Hall, and a Provisional Committee elected in order to create a national system of technical education. By July, expert advisors were engaged and by November work towards the provision of

³³ Danby Seymour, *City Guilds Reform Fly Sheets - City Guilds Reform Association (1876)*.

³⁴ Cotton, who was supposed to be at the head of this self-serving, purely instrumental agitation, was actually against guild involvement in technical education.

³⁵ *TheTimes*, 21 September 1876.

³⁶ *City Press*, Saturday, 12 May 1877.

a Central Institution was under way. After finding temporary expression in Finsbury Technological College in 1879 (with sums promised by the Livery Companies totalling over £11 million), a site in Exhibition Road, South Kensington was opened in June 1880.³⁷

Until recently it was plausible to view the genesis of the City and Guilds Institute in 1877, and with it a national system of technical education, simply in these defensive and reactive terms. New evidence, however, has emerged that suggests that the actions of the combined Companies were motivated by something more than self-preservation.³⁸ A letter from Thomas Hughes MP, Chairman and Secretary of the Crystal Palace Company, on 24 November 1871, before the onslaught of Liberal criticism, asked the Corporation and the Companies whether they wished to participate in an exhibition of Works of Art and Manufacture. Called to the Mansion House by the Lord Mayor on 10 January 1872, a sub-committee of representatives from the guilds was convened in order to further the stated aims and to add to them other ideas connected to the goal of technical education.³⁹ When it reconvened in July, Lord Mayor Gibbons (1809-1876) warned that if this work was not voluntarily undertaken by the City Companies it would probably be arbitrarily forced upon them. The object of this caution may have been the anticipation of threats from the state. However, it may also suggest that the Companies were experiencing pressures from within to redefine their role in society. When in 1871 the then Lord Mayor referred to the project of technical education as a 'patriotic duty', he may have been responding to another, less defensive and more parochial, agenda.⁴⁰ He may also have been placing in context the Conference on a General System of Technical Education called by Lord Mayor J.C. Lawrence (1820-1897) as early as

³⁷ Jennifer Lang, *City and Guilds of London Institute Centenary 1878-1978* (London, 1978). The Central Institute, as it became, was designed to be analogous to the Ecole Centrale, Paris, the German polytechnic system and the Institute of Technology, Massachusetts. In 1879 the number examined was 202 at 23 centres and in 7 subjects; in 1880 816 were examined at 85 centres, and in 24 subjects. In 1881, 1,563 were examined at 115 centres and in 28 subjects; in 1882 1,061 were examined at 146 centres and in 38 subjects; and in 1883 there were 2,397 candidates in all. See *Nineteenth Century*, xv1, 89, July, (1884).

³⁸ Clare M. Clubb, 'The Archives of the City and Guilds of London Institute' *Journal of the Society of Archivists*, 8, 2, (1986).

³⁹ G. L. (Mans) Ms. 22, 000 *Minutes of the Committee of representatives of the City Corporation and of the Livery Companies of London to Consider the Promotion of Technical Education (1872-73), 10 January 1872*. The minute book of these meetings was found in the Chamberlain of London's strong room and was transferred from the Corporation of London Records Office to the Guildhall Library in 1985.

⁴⁰ *Beehive*, 4 November 1871.

October 1869 and the prizes and lectures on individual craftsmanship that the Livery Companies of the City of London had been giving for years.⁴¹

Yet, although efforts to foster technical education served to deflect political criticism from the Livery Companies, as they had been alert to the possibility of attack before the 1870s, this was far from the entire rationale. We can also discern a deeper concern for the crafts that was once the justification for the existence of the guild system. Some, like the Goldsmiths' and the Fishmongers' and to a lesser extent the Founders' and Stationers', still maintained some powers of regulation; others though, like the Fanmakers', could only celebrate the skills that it once held in monopoly. The next, and most natural move, was to display examples and drawings of fans of every variety. The Company even attracted women into its ranks, apparently as an accessory to the craft. The overall purpose for this renewed celebration of work was concealed in an effort to address Britain's mounting economic anxieties, which had developed long before Liberal attacks on the usefulness or otherwise of the City guilds. When Lord Mayor Phillips (1811-1889) opened the City of London Working Man's Industrial Exhibition at Guildhall in March 1866, he had a message to the artisans present: 'To them he would say, on the part of the Corporation and of the capitalists of the City, our welfare is bound up with yours'. And so it was, with the Great Exhibition of 1851 fading as a memory and the Paris Exhibition of 1867 yet to provide an unexpected shock. If the example of the first informed the activities of the guilds in the 1860s, the second played on their collective minds thereafter and led indirectly to the International Exhibition in 1873.

Companies ran competitions in technical skills during the 1860s connected to their respective trades, and some even funded local and later national colleges in the same spirit. When looking back twenty or thirty years later, from the perspective of what was by then an evolving national system of technical education, some Companies sought to claim the mantle of pioneer. For example, the Turners' and the Coachmakers', both jealous of the Clothworkers' claim to this prize, recalled a contribution to technical education that went back to at least 1867.⁴² Others, bolder still, like the Painters' and Stainers', although still giving cash prizes for decorative painting, freehand

⁴¹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 3111 Vol. 9 *Meeting of the Master and Warden of the Cooks' Company, Thursday 4, November 1869.*

⁴² For example see, G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5,637 Vol.1 *Minutes of the Coachmakers' Company held at the Coachmakers' Hall on Thursday, 5 December 1867*; Thomas Girtin, *The Golden Ram* (London, 1958).

drawing, design and marbling, and graining in the 1870s, insisted that they first took up the subject in 1859.⁴³ If this Company began the process, others like the Plaisterers', offering prizes for those successful in the examinations for practical art at the Science and Art Department, continued it. Although it was true that the Goldsmiths' took this phase of technical education by prize-giving to its highest point, with generous awards for silver and gold ware in 1872, the Clothworkers' began its more modern, nationally oriented, stage. In 1874 the Company gave £10,000 to the Yorkshire College of Science in Leeds. With the help of this money the College eventually developed into the University of Leeds, augmented a Department of Textiles and funded a Professor in the subject. This was not the extent of the Company's efforts as students in technical institutes at Bradford, Huddersfield and Keighley eventually benefited.⁴⁴

Clearly, each Livery Company began by responding to threats of reform on an individual basis. The responses, however, gradually became collectivised and nationally focused either to changes to the City's constitution, as in 1849 when a ratepaying clause was introduced into the Freedom of the City, or as in 1852 when it was proposed that Livery voting rights cast to elect the Lord Mayor and Corporation officers in Common Hall should be abolished.⁴⁵ When threats were made on their corporate wealth in 1876, although still driven by parochial political concerns as well as a romantic attachment to the craft, they acted within the context of national economic decline. But as they did so, the conceit that they enjoyed as doyens of civil society, separate from the state, (the role attributed to them by Black) became less credible. Labels such as 'independent' and 'voluntarist' rang with a hollow sound. This became particularly obvious as the more they yielded power to the centre the more the old mantras were mouthed. As the 1880s approached, the Livery Companies, like the Corporation, less delegated tasks to the state than offered up their services to it. The 'slightly hysterical Liberals', and their 'choleric' adherents in the Reform Association believed, observing this process, they were getting nearer to the 'heart' or 'soul' of the City. They were right.

⁴³ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5667 Vol. 6 *Minutes of the Painters' and Stainers' Company*, 10 December 1873.

⁴⁴ Frank Foden, *Philip Magnus - Victorian Educational Pioneer* (London, 1970), p. 131.

⁴⁵ I. G. Doolittle, *'City of London'*, p. 54. Twenty-nine Companies petitioned against the Bill, and 2,130 signed the Livery petition. On this occasion over 2,000 Liverymen signed the petition against the move and twenty-nine Companies made their own protest against the proposed Bill, at a moment when it could indeed be claimed that the City was roused, if not united.

The 'reawakening' of the Livery Companies, with their promotion of technical education did not come exclusively from the fear of political reform or pride in the craft. The Royal Commission on Technical Education in 1884 had no doubt of the national importance of the Companies in this respect. Filtering out individual and important notes from the cacophony of calls for technical education, they concluded that, 'The City and Guilds of London Institute owes its existence to the conviction of the Liverymen that technical instruction is a necessary condition of the welfare of our great industries'.⁴⁶ This was a deceptively simple summary of the position but it does suggest that the Companies were addressing a wider agenda than that of their own survival. Nobody made that link - between the actions of apparently autonomous associations and the requirements of the economy - clearer than one of the witnesses to the Commission Alderman Waterlow (1822-1906). As a businessman and former Lord Mayor he was prime mover in the Clothworkers' Company for the cause of technical education, and vice-president of the 'City and Guilds of London Institute for the Advancement of Technical Education'. This eminent member of the Corporation, along with Owen Roberts, Clerk of the Clothworkers' Company, believed with other contemporaries that the call for technical education dated from Britain's adverse performance at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, the progress of some foreign countries, and the better technical education given to their workmen, managers, and engineers. The point, surely, was that figures like Waterlow and Owen and other members of the Livery Companies had other identities than that of functionaries of the guilds to which they belonged. Underneath the ermine and disguised by the archaic language, were acute businessmen faced with a cluster of serious economic problems. Consequently they responded as interested businessmen by dispatching Walter McLaren, a manufacturer and partner in the firm of Smith and McLaren of Keighley and R. Beaumont, a textile instructor at the Yorkshire College to the Continent, on a fact-finding mission.⁴⁷ They too, like other businessmen, could see the advantages that Britain had accrued over the course of a century or more slipping away. It was this

⁴⁶ (PP) *First Report of Royal Commissioners on Technical Education; 1881, xxv1; Further reports with Evidence and Appendix; 1884, xx1x., xxx., xxx., (1)* (henceforth Commission on Technical Education), p. 514 .

⁴⁷ F. E. Foden, *'A History of Technical Examinations'*, p. 301.

solitary factor, it might be argued, that loomed larger in the mind than the simple preservation of any Livery Company, no matter how old and luminary.⁴⁸

The Commission itself while able to boast that 'our people still maintain their position at the head of the industrial world' and to proclaim the 'invective power and practical skill of our countrymen', also warned of the progress that had been made by France, Germany, Belgium and Switzerland.⁴⁹ Plainly, a change of attitude had been affected since Lord Mayor Besley (1794-1876), on receiving a deputation from the adolescent National University for Industrial and Technical Training in 1870 had recalled, with not a little levity, his experiences on a recent trip to the Continent. Travelling between Bologna and Paris, it emerged that eleven out of thirteen train engines were of English construction thus proving, in his mind at least, Britain's manufacturing domination. Despite his reservations about the details of the report presented to him, he nevertheless suggested the establishment of a Technical College, calling a meeting in the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House to discuss it.⁵⁰

Notwithstanding obvious complacency, an important meeting in August 1872 took place that marked the beginning of the phase of comprehensive co-operation between Livery Companies and the state. A representative from the Cordwainers' appealed that 'something should be done to unite the analogous industries represented by similar Companies, so that they might represent real industries and again do something to help England to regain the commercial ascendancy which she has lost'.⁵¹ Later in 1877, when the aforementioned report made by McLaren and Beaumont was read to the Clothworkers', it was noted that 'It has long been a reproach to us that we should have allowed ourselves in the race for excellence and proficiency in technical education to be surpassed by the peoples of the continent'.⁵² Just a few years later the former Home Secretary, Sir R. Cross,

⁴⁸ D. W. Jordan, 'The Cry for Useless Knowledge: Education for a New Victorian Technology' *IEE Proceedings*, 132, 8, December (1985), pp. 587-601.

⁴⁹ (PP) *Commission on Technical Education*, (1884), p.505 'we have attached considerable relative importance to that portion of our Commission which directed us to inquire into the condition of industry in foreign countries; and it is our duty to state that, although the display of Continental manufactures at the Paris International Exhibition in 1878 had led us to expect great progress, we were not prepared for so remarkable a development of their industrial establishments, as we actually found in France, in Germany, in Belgium, and in Switzerland'.

⁵⁰ *City Press*, Saturday, 8 October 1870.

⁵¹ *City Press*, Saturday, 3 August 1872.

⁵² *City Press*, Saturday, 12 May 1877.

although still confessing that he believed 'in the earnestness, in the vigour, and in the capacity of Lancashire men', also admitted the 'great inventive genius' of the Americans.⁵³ Even in that 'signal year' of 1876, when Gladstone was receiving his Freedom from the Turners' in the presence of Kay-Shuttleworth and Baroness Coutts, it was noticed how 'with the vast extension of commerce, the pressure of competition [has] become more constant and sharper, and the necessity of falling back upon our ingenuity and developing our resources has become greater and greater'.⁵⁴ The effect of the International Exhibition at Crystal Palace, like those since 1851, was to clarify the threat to Britain's industrial strength from mainland Europe and America.⁵⁵ In this context William Spottiswoode, manufacturing employer, member of the Stationers' Company and President of the Royal Society, appeared before the Livery Companies Commission on behalf of the City and Guild Technical Institute in 1882. He too believed 'that the superiority of foreign manufacturers, as evinced by successful competition, is largely due to technical instruction'. However, he argued that English empiricism, rule of thumb or the homespun philosophy of the home-grown workman should be supplemented by formally taught theory away from the factory but not be replaced by it.⁵⁶ Nor should its essentially voluntarist character be distorted or the relationship between employer and employee be interfered with, and certainly not by the state. The issue of advancing competition from overseas, although addressed, remained unresolved. Notwithstanding this, the Coachmakers' were not only willing to acknowledge the consequences of a highly-trained workforce in both France and America but were willing to make suggestions for its resolution. Accordingly, guildsman George Norgate Hooper reported on his interview regarding science and technical education with a representative from the Society of Arts Manufacturers and Commerce (a body, along with the Science and Art Department that examined students from a disparate range of local colleges) to the Court of Assistants in March 1877. He argued that because of a lack of education the artisan was 'incapable, in many cases, of grasping a new idea or understanding the advantage of a new method or invention and instead of assisting in the adoption of improvements and better methods of work,

⁵³ *City Press*, Saturday, 17 September 1881.

⁵⁴ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 3295 Vol. 7 *Minutes of a Special Court of the Turners' Company*, 16 February 1876.

⁵⁵ This was the subject of a letter from Liberal Common Councilmen Sir John Bennett, *City Press* Wednesday, 1 December 1880.

⁵⁶ (PP) *Livery Companies Commission, Mins Evid (1729-), Wednesday, 28 June 1882.*

such prejudice causes them to resist as long as possible all change whatever it may be, so that a Master who wishes to improve the products of his factory has first directly or indirectly to devote the time and energy to overcome the impediments of his heavy and ever present resistance to change, instead of occupying his self and finding new outlets and layers for his production'. What was required to remedy this conservatism in the workplace was an educational programme that would introduce new ideas and work processes which would, in turn, engender flexibility and free thought. More importantly the foreign employee, unlike his English counterpart, co-operated in order to 'assist their employers to compete successfully with English manufacturers, not only in the soil of England but in English Colonies'.⁵⁷ During the 1870s, we can identify at least two responses to this kind of appeal for similar co-operation at home. At a meeting at the Bishopsgate ward Club, Common Councilman Boor articulated a familiar complaint (arch-critic of the City James Beal, Chelsea's Liberal MP, made similar points to the Livery Companies Royal Commission) that the problem of technical education should be tackled by the London School Board. He, for one, hesitated in supporting a scheme that might promote dissatisfaction and would 'set class against class'. In any case, lack of technical education was not the main problem but the 'lamentable organisations which had been found amongst the working men here'.⁵⁸ At the other extreme, the idea was mooted that an arranged marriage between the associational City Companies, and the collectivist trade unions, should go ahead for the sake of the national family and its unwanted but necessary offspring, technical education.⁵⁹

If the City bridegroom had mixed feelings, the trade union bride, surprisingly perhaps, was giving the proposal serious consideration. The subject of technical education was discussed at the first Trade Union Congress of 1868. Moreover, some of the affiliated unions, particularly in the building industry and notably in the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, began their own systems of education. When the Workmen's Technical Education Committee was appointed on 14 March 1868 it wasted no time in organising a series of lectures to demonstrate 'how greatly the

⁵⁷ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5,637 Vol. 2 *Minutes of the Coachmakers*, Thursday 8 March 1877.

⁵⁸ *City Press* Saturday, 29 March 1873.

⁵⁹ *City Press* Saturday, 5 August 1876. The Livery Companies contained advocates of both extremes. Huxley wrote to George Howell MP on 2 January 1880: 'The City Companies should be constantly reminded that a storm is brewing. There are excellent men among them, who want to do what is right, and need help against the sluggards and reactionaries'. (*Bishopsgate Institute Library*), *George Howell Collection; Letter Books*, 880.

success of National Industry depends upon the progress of scientific discovery and the diffusion of scientific knowledge among all classes'. As these lectures were proving inadequate and the lack of parliamentary action frustrating, a deputation was dispatched in 1869 to the Mansion House with a view to seek funding for a programme of technical education.⁶⁰ It seems that the trade unions were not sheltered, either from the cold winds of intensified foreign competition, or the colder blast from economic depression. This trade union activity, however, was not motivated solely by economic considerations. In the pursuit of the interest of their members - not their class - the trade unions sought an education that, although it might have impinged on the productive process, was essentially about self-improvement.⁶¹ This was a tradition that can be traced through the Mechanic's Institutes, the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, the London Artisan's Club and the Artisan's Institute.⁶²

Thus, what might be termed education for citizenship and not production was the main theme of a deputation to the Prince of Wales, on behalf of the 'Trades Guild of Learning For the Promotion of Technical and Higher Education among the Working Classes of the United Kingdom'.⁶³ At this meeting of mainly City Companies, it was generally argued that 'if Great Britain intended to keep the prominent industrial position she had acquired among all nations she must devote her whole energy to the advancement of the people in the Arts and Sciences as applied to industry'. Like the schemes being simultaneously pursued by the Livery Companies, technical education was seen as the key to national survival and prosperity. This though was not just education for business

⁶⁰ David Hopkin Thomas, *The Development of Technical Education in England 1851-1889 - With Special Reference to Economic Factors* (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of London, 1947); To say that it also signified a 'wider' demand for a more equal distribution of wealth or that 'It represented part of the social process by which the workers' expressed their constructive criticisms of the social order', may be almost entirely encouraged by a history written in the 1940s around the warm glow generated at the end of Labour's Magnificent Journey.

⁶¹ This adherence to a liberal education was later inherited by both the Independent Labour Party and the Labour Party. See, L. O. Ward, 'Technical Education and the Politician's 1870-1918' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, xx1, (1973), pp.34-39.

⁶² Stephen F. Cotgrove, *Technical Education and Social Change* (London, 1958).

⁶³ Membership was led by the President, the Rt. Hon. Earl Granville (Chancellor of the University of London) and vice-president's included Matthew Arnold, Mayor Donnelly of the Science and Art Department, Thomas Hughes MP, Alderman William McArthur MP, Samuel Morley, A. J. Mundella MP, Revd Henry Solly and Alfred Tennyson. See also H. Solly, *These Eighty Years* (1893); A. Ellison, *Technical Education for the Masses* (London, 1896); J. Scott Russell, *Systematic Technical Education for the English People* (London, 1869); F. W. Edwards, *Technical Education. Its Rise and Progress* (London, 1885)

but was also designed for 'those who toil faithfully with their hands to have opportunities of improving their minds, and of sharing in the higher and more refining enjoyments of culture and knowledge'. This was an organisation, although promising the false allure of a 'higher culture', extended an invitation to Trade Societies, while suggesting the possible formation of local organisations to be called British Guilds.⁶⁴ These organisations may, if they had been formed, have blurred the anyway tenuous dividing mark between models of civil society and collectivism. The aim was simple:- 'a combined effort among all classes to aid in the technical and higher education of those who have too long been deprived of these great advantages'. The target was a little less simply reached:

Apart from all special reasons, the Council maintains the principle that the appreciation of Beauty, Order, Harmony and Truth is essential to moral progress, and to a true conception of life; that the faculties for perceiving them are common to all men; and that it is the personal duty of every individual to cultivate these faculties to the utmost. Material luxuries, once confined to the few, now tend to be more and more placed within the reach of the many. Unless the higher aims and nobler enjoyments of existence are also brought within the reach of the whole people by means of education, moral progress will be arrested, and the result will be national degradation and decay.⁶⁵

The link made between individual and national prosperity in this debate is both unique and important. Whether the proposal for a corporate vision of British Guilds, localised and classless, was either possible or attractive must remain as one of history's counterfactuals.

One of the leading lights of this organisation was the Revd. Solly, an old moral-force Chartist and confederate of Toulmin in the City debating society, *'The Academics'*. Conflicting responses to the problem of how far the state should be employed in the useful pursuit of technical education was revealed in an exchange he had with the Clerk of the Mercers' Company. The nature of Liberalism's divide were at the same time captured in the utterances of both men. Revd. Solly explained that formerly the Master worked with his men and it was in his interest that the apprentice

⁶⁴ Mark Francis discusses ideas of higher culture in his 'Who Still has 'Sweetness and Light' in Studies of Victorian Culture and Politics', *Historical Journal*, 39, 4, (1996), pp. 1079-1096

⁶⁵ G. L. (Mans) Ms. 22,000 *Minutes of the Committee of Representatives of the City Corporation and of the Livery Companies of London to Consider the Promotion of Technical Education (1872-1873), 21 July 1873.*

should remain untaught. Now the Master was a man of capital and could not do this, and the workman's interest was the other way.⁶⁶ The New Guildsmen would seek to patch up what was essentially a ruptured social relationship by reuniting common interests. To the representative from the Livery Companies this was an idea that would violate the libertarian pledge not to interfere with the relationship between master and man. In all likelihood, moreover, it would mean the end of voluntarism as well as a much larger role for the state. It was these lines of demarcation that not only divided Liberalism, but also makes a nonsense of the civil society and collectivist dichotomy that positions guilds in a voluntarist civil society and trade unions as unproblematically proto-Statist.

(iii)

It was for these reasons that the Livery Companies, and those who considered their future, began to ponder the role of the state. 'How far is the State morally right or politically wise in interfering with corporations or trustees holding property in perpetuity, when the original objects for which the property was acquired can no longer be carried out? If the state does so interfere what is to be done with the money? What is charity and what is pauperisation? How far is trade to be stimulated or controlled? Is it well to educate artisans, and if so in what way?' These were the essential questions that the Royal Commission on the Livery Companies, constituted in 1880, sought to ask, and the established enemies of the City - Firth, Beal and James - sought to press to legislation. Of the twelve Commissioners, nine were members of the Liberal party, while only three could be relied upon to defend, and then only in degrees, the City's interests.⁶⁷ Clearly, with its conclusions subject to review by fellow City sceptic and Home Secretary, William Harcourt, radicals must have sensed an approaching victory. In spite of this, the Final Report(s) dissolved into fragments and the Liberal government, distracted by other parliamentary business, was out of office before any of the

⁶⁶ G. L. (Mans) Ms. 22,000 *Minutes of the Committee of Representatives of the City Corporation and of the Livery Companies of London to Consider the Promotion of Technical Education (1872-1873)*, 21 July 1873.

⁶⁷ Members of the Royal Commission were Derby, Bedford, Sherbrooke, Coleridge, Sydney Waterlow, Albert Pell MP, Walter H. James, J. F. B. Firth, Thomas Burt, Richard A. Cross, N. M. De Rothschild, and W. J. R. Cotton; see 'The London Livery Companies' *Quarterly Review*, 159, 317, (1885), p. 40.

recommendations of the Commission could be enacted. Furthermore, Liberal opinion was split between, on the one hand, those who would have preferred the great wealth of the Livery Companies to be put to 'public utility' and on the other, those who made a resolute defence of the 'rights of property'. Politically the Chairman, Lord Derby, had already been compromised by an unauthorised leak by his Secretary. H. D. Warr in a letter dated September 1884 to the editors of the Liberal newspapers that implored them to 'educate the opinions of the Liberal electors of the provinces, who have little acquaintance with London electors' for the controversial outcome of the Commission. Nevertheless, the Majority Report signed by nine members of the Commission, including Waterlow, was potentially damaging.⁶⁸ For Firth, who firmed up this commitment with a memorandum of his own, it was not damaging enough. But to the defenders of the City it represented a very dangerous precedent indeed. In particular, it made clear that the state reserved the right to batter down the ancient doors of the Guildhall on behalf of a wider public. A 'Dissenting' Report, signed by Cross, Rothschild and Cotton, identified just this point and then in opposition insisted, in line with evidence submitted by the Grocers', that the Liveries were notable and worthwhile voluntarist bodies, 'nurseries of charities and seminaries of good citizens'.⁶⁹

The most fervent opponent of the Majority Report was Alderman Cotton who published a separate protest and placed himself (as he had done as Chairman of the 'Guilds Defence Association') in diametric opposition once again to Firth. To him, the members of the Companies were men of the highest honour, exercising 'a very good and important moral influence not only upon citizens and City life, but upon public life generally'. It was the definition of 'public' that was at stake here. The Conservative Cotton was in no doubt that it meant the discrete fellowship and moral elect of his Livery and Sister Guilds. Even if the membership of the City Companies admitted

⁶⁸ Interestingly, the decision of Waterlow to sign the Majority Report may be because he was hoping to lead the new unitary authority. Unlike other Liberal Aldermen, he did not defect to Liberal Unionism in 1886. See a letter written by the Secretary to the Royal Commission to the Liberal newspapers, in Major James Walter, *The Royal Commission - The London City Livery Companies Vindication* (London, 1885), 'It appears to us obvious that the State has a right at any time to disestablish and disendow the Companies of London, provided the just claims of existing members to compensation be allowed. We do not, however, recommend this course to Your Majesty's Government. We are of opinion that the State should intervene, but only for the purposes of (1) preventing the alienation of the property of the Companies of London, (2) securing the permanent application of a considerable portion of the corporate income thence arising to useful purposes, (3) declaring new trusts in cases in which a better application of the trust income of the Companies has become desirable.'

⁶⁹ (PP) *Livery Companies Commission*, p. 70-71.

artisans, the Courts - because of the punitive level of fees - were largely middle-class institutions. This was the extent of his definition of 'public'. To someone like James Beal, on the other hand, the property of the Livery Companies was corporate and therefore public. To this champion of the artisan, dedicated as he was to the relief of the London-wide ratepayer, property belonged to the 'people and the metropolis'.⁷⁰ The language may have been shared, like that of the Livery Company and the Trade Union, but the social and intellectual boundaries that separated each ensured that while the former attracted some of the notables of the City's business community, such as the families of both Crosse and Blackwell, the Knight family of the soap 'Knights Castile' and Glyn's of Glyn's Bank, the latter took in the wage workers of an industrial society.

If Cotton was in a minority of one when the Commission finally reported in 1885, henceforth he would find himself in the vast majority. The tone had already been set during the course of the oral evidence, when arguments had been raised against any recommendation that the corporate property of the Companies should be taken away by the state. Such an act, it was thought, would amount to confiscation, and would shake the confidence of the owners of property. This threat to the rights of property, if implemented, would have pointed a sword at Cotton's definition of 'public', prized as such because it was exclusive. It would also be an injunction designed to challenge a particular definition of liberty - the Lockian idea that an individual had the proprietary right to both self and property. A deputation from the 'Tory' Goldsmiths', consisting of Sir Frederick Bramwell and the secretary of the Company, Mr Walter Prideaux, were quick to recognise these dangers. They reasoned that the Companies were legitimate owners of their property and that the state's threat of 'spoliation' and confiscation was indeed a serious proposition, one that could too easily stretch to include the property rights of an individual, a business or even a free association. 'It is the first time I have heard it suggested', said an indignant Sir Frederick, 'that there should be a limit to the property held by an individual'.⁷¹ Not only was this an affront to the rights of property, it also went against what was conceived of as the ancient political rights of the Livery Companies. In fact, as Chapter Five will argue, from this moment liberty and the rights of property became confused.

⁷⁰ (PP) *Livery Companies Commission, Mins Evid.*, 2203-2209.

⁷¹ (PP) *Livery Companies Commission, Mins Evid.*, 2592.

In the same way that conservation rationalised the forces of modernisation in Chapter One, so the defence of property was hidden under the cloak of antiquity now. The legitimising idiom for this defence was only credible because it was accompanied by what one author called the 'Five Great Points of Fellowship':- charity, citizenship, commerce, comradeship and conviviality. Neither sectional, like their wayward cousins the Trade Unions, nor tainted by the vulgarity of modern capitalism, they remained a product of the spirit of association.⁷² Yet as the offices and banking palaces grew up around them and even as bankers, merchants, barristers and politicians swelled their ranks, they disclaimed both 'kinship and sympathy' with the City's new plutocracy. The Liveryman was a different 'type' to the modern City man, whom it was claimed, was excluded from the tables and fellowship of the Livery Companies. This said, the banker and merchant were reluctantly seen as a way of keeping in touch with modern society and were tolerated and then welcomed for this reason. In fact, it was the twin of pro-active and reactive strategies that were employed to counteract the threat of modern society and its attendant representative democracy. Both had been at work between Brentano's description of the guilds as 'associations of capital' to Unwin's 'organs of social progress'. Within the City, the political consequences of this shift were enormous. Firth looked back at the battlefield of change and observed that in 1870 a considerable proportion of the City's Liverymen were loyal to the Liberal party but 'By 1887 the condition of things were completely changed, and there is not a single Gladstonian Liberal to be found in the whole Court of Assistants of the largest of the Companies which formerly gloried in its connection with the Liberal party..no single influence has contributed so much to the steady downfall of Liberal supremacy in the Home Counties as this'.⁷³ If the collective awakening of the City Companies did not occur until the 1870s, there were more than faint stirrings of activity stretching back in some instances to the 1850s. Yet, some have argued that the immediate reasons for the sudden ringing of alarm bells at this time were political rather than industrial or philanthropic. Apparently, the Companies choose to remain in quiescent enjoyment of their wealth and privileges until attacked by Liberal reformers in the early 1870s. However, as we have shown, rather than reacting exclusively from the 'fear of molestation', the Livery Companies were not only reacting to, but in some cases leading, a local industrial and ultimately a nation-wide agenda for national renewal.⁷⁴ This mutation

⁷² M. Fothergill Robinson, *The Spirit of Association - Being Some of Account of the Gilds, Friendly Societies, Co-operative Movement, and Trade Unions of Great Britain* (London, 1913).

⁷³ J. F. B. Firth, *Reform of London Government and the City Guilds* (London, 1890), p. 91.

had not been achieved without cost. Starting off as voluntarist bodies, the involvement of the Companies with technical education pushed them nearer to the state. When the Technical Instruction Act (1889) was passed, a result of recommendations of the Royal Commission, it made technical education a public responsibility.⁷⁵ As this tied the City Companies hand and foot to a developing system of statutory reform, by the First World War they found themselves, in this matter at least, almost completely dominated by the state. The historical opposites, therefore, were not between civil society and collectivism, but could also be found, as we shall see in forthcoming chapters, in competing notions of liberty.

⁷⁴ This might be an instance of what Jeffrey Herf has called 'reactionary modernism': an historical phenomena that mixes a conservative notion of technological progress with dreams of the past, Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism. Technology, culture, and politics in Weimer and the Third Reich* (Cambridge, 1984).

⁷⁵ F. C. Montague, *A Summary of the Royal Commission Report on Technical Education* (London, 1887).

Chapter Four

‘Real Liberals’, Conservatives and Associational Life in the City of London

In past times the City of London had defended the country from the power of the Crown, and the time was not far off when it would be wanted to protect them from the growing power of democracy.¹

It was no accident that Toulmin edited the volume on the English guilds in which Brentano had made his important intervention. Indeed, Toulmin's antiquarian work of retrieval was not without purpose or design. The overarching idea was to reconstruct a constitution where rights were matched by duties and social solidarity was not besmirched by interests other than those attached to citizenship or the good of the public weal. In this idealised model the Liveries were, in many ways, as important as the Corporation. Yet by 1867 political power in the City of London as a whole had passed from local democratic structures into an associational life that stretched beyond the boundaries of the City itself. When the City Elections Amendments Act of the same year cemented the ratepaying principle into the City's constitution, the membership of Ratepayer Associations and Livery Companies had become indistinguishable from the wardmotes, the traditional meeting place where neighbours would enjoy the rights and meet the responsibilities of a citizen. Like the Inquest Committees, by now abolished, where the laws and rules of the ward would be dispatched, these examples of what Toulmin thought of as the natural rights of the Free Born Englishman were exercised by the inhabitant regardless of social status. Before this date then, the cause of constitutional freedom and of civil and religious liberty characterised City politics, from the lowest watchman or vestryman, to the Lord Mayor himself. This is not to suggest that before 1867 there was a over-arching unanimity on political matters - far from it - but rather that decisions affecting the City as a community were more likely to be taken in an open forum. After the introduction of a ratepaying clause into the Freedom of the square mile in 1849, both discussion and decision-making were much less transparent, disappearing behind the closed doors of a plethora of

¹ Mr. Dixon-Hartland MP, speaking at the inaugural banquet of the City Constitutional Club in 1884.

associations whose interest was bound up with the sectional needs of property. This fundamental political shift meant that membership of the clubs and societies that made up this associational life were recruited from places outside the City limits. No longer did the radical tradesman walk from his shop or warehouse to a meeting of citizens. The railways, both overground and later underground, had cut a path through the City and 'improvements' had removed the homes of many artisans into the throng of a burgeoning metropolis. Accordingly, it was the increasingly conservative businessman that stayed awhile after the office was closed in order to discuss, in the club or association, the pressing business of the place in which he now worked, but may not have lived. As importantly, in 1867 the franchise was extended from a seven-mile radius to one of twenty-five miles, and included members of the Livery Companies.² This, coupled with the introduction of the ratepaying clause as a basis of the Freedom, meant that for the first time there existed a growing influence that emanated, not only from within the City walls, but from the Home Counties and beyond.

These salient facts, naturally, had a political dynamic of their own, both in municipal and parliamentary elections. It was now impossible for friends and neighbours, often born, educated, and married within the City, (until the 1850s, they were buried in the City), to gather in the wardmotes or Common Hall, and there to pronounce on the issues of the day. Issues like the City's support for Queen Caroline in the 1820s, parliamentary reform in the 1830s, and the cause of Protestantism and national self-determination in the 1860s, were all products of the kind of active citizenship that Toulmin had defended. They were also, as when the Italian nationalist Garibaldi was given the Freedom of the City in 1864, designed to further 'the cause of constitutional freedom'. Yet the honour bestowed on Garibaldi was conditional. When Western Wood, MP for the City and son of the radical Lord Mayor Matthew Wood, met fellow Liberals at the London Tavern in October 1862, it was both in order to express sympathy with Garibaldi and to discuss why the Lord Mayor had refused permission for the Guildhall to be used for a meeting in his support. Certainly, it was decided, 'it was in no love for the Pope that the use of the Hall was refused'. The current Chief Magistrate was a 'staunch Protestant', but he was also a confirmed opponent of revolutions.³

² *City Press*, Saturday, 21 November 1868; The Liberal, Alderman Lawrence MP boasted that 'his colleagues had obtained for the electors of the City the privilege of being able to vote although residing twenty-five miles outside the City'. Ironically, this was to be one of the key factors in the undoing of City Liberalism.

³ *City Press*, Saturday, 25 October 1862.

Despite giving much vocal support to the cause that Garibaldi represented - a whole session of the Common Council was given over to his visit - reservations were made about the methods employed to prosecute his cause.⁴

Ambivalence, then to progressive constitutional matters informed much of the Corporation's attitude by the 1860s. On the occasion of a meeting at the Mansion House in April 1866, it was agreed that in the increasing pressure for parliamentary reform the City stood on a platform of religious and civil liberty, but this did not, of itself, equate with modern notions of democracy or progress.⁵ In contrast, at a gathering in Guildhall called by the Reform League and the Working Men's Association in August of the same year, the City was chosen not so much as the home of a Whiggish idea of liberty but, as Edmund Beales of the Reform League put it, because it was 'ever foremost to protect and advance the rights of the people'. Notably, unlike the earlier Mansion House meeting, those present were not business leaders or Alderman, but Liberal Common Councilman as well as radicals such as Charles Bradlaugh.⁶ This was truly an event worthy of the older traditions of the City's communality. Once again, in anticipation of constitutional reform, the City was apparently playing host to another social class pressing its claims. However, this was the last time the mythological giants Gog and Magog, and the statues of Wellington and Nelson, would cast their disapproving eyes down at such a splendid, popular occasion.

It was estimated that up to 6,000 people were gathered in the humidity of the Guildhall, while another 10,000 waited outside. Within the Hall, the rostrum was covered by a large silk banner. On one side it said, simply, 'The Reform League'. On the other, it was emblazoned with the legend 'Respect the Law, but not Privilege'. Outside, a quiet and well-behaved crowd was overseen by a small number of policemen from the City force, 'a different breed from the others', mixing and talking with the demonstrators. Although it was high summer, the walls of the yard were lined with holed gas pipes, in order that the area could be lit after dark. At about 7.30pm, the distant bands of the Holborn and Clerkenwell branches of the Reform League could be heard above the traffic noise

⁴ (C.L.R.O.) *Minutes of the Court of Common Council, Wednesday, 20 April 1864.*

⁵ *City Press*, Saturday, 14 April 1866.

⁶ This kind of pluralism did not endure. Sir Thomas Nelson, the City Solicitor, seized the 1882 Christmas edition of the *Freethinker* from the City's streets. The Corporation itself was instrumental in bringing the editor, G. W. Foote to trial for blasphemy. See David Nash, 'Blasphemy in Victorian Britain? Foote and the Freethinker' *History Today*, October, 1995.

that, in Cheapside at least, had been halted by the swelling numbers of people attracted to the scene. As the procession came into sight, banners were seen held aloft: 'Long Live Gladstone, Bright, Beales and the Lord Mayor' and 'We Working Men are for Peace and Order and a Vote in Parliament'. An impromptu platform had been made outside the Guildhall entrance out of loose stones (surely a further testament to the event's peaceful nature) from which former members of the Corporation, like Common Councillor and Reform Leaguer George Brooke of Newgate Street, held a second meeting. Meanwhile, from the top of a stationary cab outside the Guildhall Coffee Rooms, sitting Common Councillors such as the Liberal, John Richardson, previously in charge of Garibaldi's reception committee, moved a pro-reform resolution identical to that passed at the formal Guildhall meeting. Along with what was still a living constituency, the appeal was a shared one, aimed at potential voters. Were they not, he asked, all of the people and with the people? ⁷ As the bands and banners of the City branches left in the failing light at around 9.00pm to return to their respective committee rooms they were followed by thousands of supporters. As they did so, it was without the knowledge that, in this guise at least, they would never return.

Almost exactly a year later, another meeting was called at the Guildhall. This time it was chaired by Lord Mayor Sir Thomas Gabriel (1811-1891) and sought to consider amendments made to the 1867 Reform Bill by the House of Lords. It petitioned Parliament against the increase of copyhold and leasehold qualifications from five shillings to ten; the reduction of the number of parliamentary City votes that could be cast from four, to elect four representatives, to three in order to elect the same number; and the suggestion of a payment of a county or borough rate in addition to the poor rate. Naturally, the first and last objections were of particular importance to a property-based franchise, but it was the middle stipulation, thought to assist minority representation, that along with a number of factors would, as will shall see, have a profound effect on the post 1867 decline of the City Liberal party.

⁷ *City Press*, 11 August 1866. Although the meeting was convened by the Reform League and the Working Men's Association, it was organised under the auspices of Lord Mayor Phillips and the City Lands Committee.

Between the Second Reform Act in 1867 and the Third Reform Act in 1884, the fortunes of the City Liberal party, in both parliamentary and municipal elections, went into steep, if relative, decline. (Appendix Five) Despite the overall reduction in the resident population, the numbers of those eligible to vote actually increased. However, the increase of voters was a result of the qualification gained by membership of a Livery Company. As Liberal strength was thought to be located in the houses and shops of the wards while Conservative strongholds were conversely found in the Temples and Guilds, Liberals suffered a structural electoral disadvantage that grew worse over time. It was not so much that 'radicalism lost its constituency' through depopulation, but rather that political power had been transferred to the City Companies.⁸

Liberal responses to this fundamental problem were often piecemeal and more often belated. The 'City of London Registration Association' was established in 1846, and although by the 1870s City Liberals finally led by the considerable figure of Sir John Lubbock, they consistently lacked both a diagnosis and a credible strategy to counter their predicament. In 1874, when they lost majority support, Lubbock at last announced a response to one of Conservatism's advantages: a Club that would combine conviviality with political organisation. It was hoped that City Liberalism's new home would 'provide accommodation of the very best order for its members', and where for political purposes they could receive 'general telegrams and other information'.⁹ The foundation stone of the Liberal Club was laid by Earl Granville in May 1876, and it was built to classical design in Walbrook ward at a cost of £38,000. Money, it would seem, was not a problem.¹⁰ Neither was membership. By the end of the 1870s 1,200 members were reported. None of this, however, translated into political activity. While Liberal associations up and down the country were denouncing Conservative foreign policy over the Bulgarian atrocities, Liberals in the City, or more particularly those in the Liberal Club, were accused of idleness. According to one member, the

⁸ J. Davies, *Reforming London: The London Government Problem 1855-1900* (Oxford, 1988), p.54.

⁹ *City Press*, Saturday, 21 March 1874.

¹⁰ *City Press*, Saturday, 15 December 1883. Indeed, it was suggested by Common Councillor W. W. Tickle, Alderman Whitehead and Deputy McGeorge that a fund to commission a statue to Gladstone should be started by City Liberals. The cost was estimated at £250, but the City Liberal Club quickly raised £1,400, 'and double that amount could have been got had it had been required'. The statue finally cost £1,100.

Political Committee, despite holding 180 meetings throughout the year, had not shown a sufficient amount of zeal in the cause. Another felt that the constituency did not receive sufficient attention. Alderman J.C. Lawrence (1820-1897) summarised the position by pointing to the Liberal Club's comparative newness and general disorganisation.¹¹ Yet when in October 1884, a meeting at the Cannon Street Hotel was organised by the Liberals to discuss the Third Reform Act and the replacement of the Lords by an elected chamber, it was limited to ticket holders and 200 Liberals were turned away. Liberalism, since the Reform League meeting in 1866, had not, it would seem, completely lost its vitality but just a wider popular support.

It did, as a result, continue to lose elections. In 1880, the City's Liberal agent and veteran of City elections of the last thirty-seven years, finally spoke out against continuous defeat: 'it is time reformers were awakened to a sense of the humiliation, the absolutely prostrate condition in which this gross abuse places the first and really the most thoroughly Liberal constituency in the Empire'. The abuse of which Sidney Smith spoke was the newly recruited and purchased votes of the City Companies. These were not, he insisted, legitimate votes and without them 'the whole natural political proclivities of the real citizenship of London are, as they always have been, free, liberal, and progressive'.¹² The 'Liberal Registration Association' had observed the increase in numbers in the Livery franchise for some years, noting that Freedom gained through the Livery was a much more attractive proposition than that obtained by the household qualification.¹³ Yet it took almost another ten years for the Executive of the City of London Liberal Association to respond to this haemorrhage of support, and thirteen before a Bill advocating the abolition of the Livery franchise was moved before Parliament.¹⁴

There were a sequence of issues, therefore, that contributed to the lack of electoral success besides the introduction of a property franchise, and the late, ineffective, establishment of a club. Insufficient attention to the Livery franchise and the minority clause that reduced the number of City votes from four to three also exacerbated the problem. In terms of policy, however, three

¹¹ *City Press*, Saturday, 27 July 1878.

¹² *Daily News*, Wednesday, 7 April 1880.

¹³ *City Press*, Saturday, 4 March 1876.

¹⁴ (P.P.) *Livery Franchise (London) Abolition - A Bill to abolish the Livery Franchise in the City of London (1888)*.

issues were prominent opinion changers in the City. Firstly, Gladstone's reform of the Irish church constituted a threat to the Union and made those dealing in imperial trades distinctly uneasy. Secondly, threats to the Corporation and the Livery Companies, from those who wished to reform London local government and appropriate the considerable wealth of these City institutions, added a potential threat to property, albeit corporate property, to underlying concerns about constitutional change. Thirdly, the Jewish vote that had become sympathetic to Conservatism over the Russian atrocities and towards Disraeli, a prime minister of Jewish extraction, underlined the problems of dealing with a fluid and changing resident constituency. The end result was both a City of finance and a civic City that, by the 1880s, were thought to be 'rampantly Conservative'. These reasons not to vote Liberal should not be underplayed. The foundation of it all, however, can be positively stated and was linked to Conservative organisation and Conservative ideology. Both, it would seem, were reaching parts that Liberals, or at least Liberals found in the City Liberal party, could no longer reach.

(ii)

By the time Alderman Robert Fowler, (1828-1891) - a Quaker turned Anglican, member of Parliament, leader of the City Conservative Association and later Lord Mayor - had made his way to the Freemasons' Tavern in November 1867, he was enthused with a political vision.¹⁵ On entering the first meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations, he must have known that if he and fellow Conservatives were not to suffer once again the reverses of the election of 1865, changes in both organisation and ideology must be affected. He was not alone, for other City figures also had a hand in the national organisation. For example, vice-presidents of the National Union included Sir Robert W. Carden, (1801-1888) Baron Dimsdale MP, (1849-1912) and H. Hucks Gibbs as well as Robert Fowler himself. Fowler was also a member of the Audit Committee. The Primrose League was also popular with Corporation figures: Dimsdale was a member of a Habitation in Hertfordshire and Sir J.W. Ellis, MP (1829-1912) was a founding member of the Byfleet Habitation (no. 303), and his wife, Lady Ellis, a member of the Ladies Grand

¹⁵ I. G. Doolittle, *The City of London and its Livery Companies* (Dorset, 1982), p. 87; H. L. Malchow, *Gentlemen Capitalists, The Social and Political World of the Victorian Businessman* (London, 1991), esp. Chap. 3, 'God and the City: Robert Fowler (1828-1891)'.

Committee by 1889. To what extent these people were active is a moot point. In 1885-86 Fowler only turned up to one meeting of a possible twelve, as a member of the National Union's Finance Committee and as Lord Mayor that year, he turned up to none.¹⁶ At local level, however, Conservative activity was far from depressed. In terms of organisation, both ward activity and recruitment in the Livery Companies was deemed necessary. Hence, the formation of the 'City Registration Society' in June 1868. At the first meeting held at Garraway's Coffee Houses, Change Alley, Fowler acted as Chairman and argued that it was highly important that there should be a Conservative Committee in every ward, particularly as the lack of such committees was the probable reason for the Conservatives failure at the last parliamentary election.¹⁷ As to the Livery franchise, a meeting of City Conservatives, both businessmen and Aldermen, hosted at the London Tavern just a few months later, spotted the opportunities presented both by the widening of the radius of the Livery vote and the reduction of City parliamentary votes, and rightly anticipated a considerable advantage to the Conservatives.¹⁸

The City Association was also assisted by changes in the methods of voting in both municipal and parliamentary elections over the period. From 1853, rules and regulations that governed municipal elections were for the first time and by order of the Court of Alderman's Privilege Committee, rationalised into an annually published wardmote book. A copy of these guidelines, for the use of ward authorities, was sent to each Alderman and was then produced for the use of ward clerks at the annual wardmotes held on 21 December or St. Thomas's Day. There was an attempt, therefore, to fix a standard and to achieve uniformity in proceedings right across the City. Nominations for candidates were received at previously held precinct meetings. Later, at the wardmote, candidates were elected by a show of hands. Since 1847 it had been ordered that returns should be made by each of the wards. There was provision that in the event of a dispute, a poll could be demanded - a fact confirmed by the Court of Aldermen in 1868. On the same lines, by

¹⁶ Unfortunately, it would seem that no minutes of the City of London Conservative Association survive for this period. For the twentieth century, however, see Keith Middlemas, 'The Party, Industry, and the City' in Anthony Seldon and Stuart Ball (eds.) *Conservative Century - The Conservative Party since 1900* (Oxford, 1994); See 1 (Bodleian Library) NUA 2/2/1 *Conservative Party Archives, Reports 1871-1890*; *Primrose League Gazette* July 6 1889 described the Lord Mayor as the 'mouthpiece of the entire nation'.

¹⁷ *City Press*, Saturday, 27 June 1868.

¹⁸ *City Press*, Saturday, 31 October 1868.

1886 the pressure for the introduction of the secret ballot had become enormous.¹⁹ Accordingly, the 25,727 municipal electors of the City were asked by the Local Government and Taxation Committee of the Court of Common Council, on a ward by ward basis, if they favoured the introduction of the secret ballot. Although 2,348 were against its introduction, 11,071 - a clear majority in every ward - declared themselves in favour of its adoption.²⁰ When it became law in 1887 it represented a violation of an older constitutional principle in the City, and one vigorously argued by Toulmin, namely the sovereign integrity of the ward or neighbourhood and the duty of the citizen to deliberate in open session with his neighbour. Instead there was a movement from disorderly or even violent elections in the 1840s, (a description of a citizenry 'deliberating' may therefore be too gentle) to polls that were a little more passive and orderly. The real change, however, was between elections that were organic and spontaneous to those which were often managed and sometimes orchestrated.

In 1867 an editorial of the *City Press* remarked that the themes in the mind of the municipal elector by the time he reached the wardmote meeting were more often mundane than utopian. Candidates pitched their appeals, in this year at least, to matters affecting the City's markets. Many looked ahead to the new meat market due to open the following year in West Smithfield, and the question of 'the final disposition of that half-hidden market in Newgate Street, which has so long been shrouded in dirt and darkness'. Farringdon Market was thought to be 'half occupied', Billingsgate Market 'too small' and Covent Garden, inadequate. Citizens mourned the passing of 'memorials of the past' soon to be swept away on the tide of 'improvements', and anticipated Holborn Viaduct due to be raised in the 'interests of humanity' and to be turned into one of the 'lions of London'.²¹ Pure and improved gas, it was thought, would soon be lighting up the City and warming its homes and businesses. Nevertheless in this year of reform, as in others, national concerns impinged on the local context. The Fenians had just caused an explosion outside the House of Detention at Clerkenwell on 13 December, resulting in seven fatal injuries and about fifty wounded. Lord Mayor Carden swore in 6,532 Special Constables in a process of enrolment that

¹⁹ For instance see G.L. (Mans) Ms. 6995 *Minutes of the Aldersgate Club, October 1881*.

²⁰ (C.L.R.O) *Minutes Court of Common Council, 1 July 1886*.

²¹ *City Press*, Saturday, 21 December 1867.

continued for a period of two weeks.²² Many, if not all, individual wards recorded their disgust and continued loyalty to the constitution. On issues both local and national, however, the wardmote was still in 1867 held forth as the emblem of English liberties, evidence of the survival of local rights and responsibilities. In contrast, as the wardmote in 1887 was for the first time held under the auspices of the secret ballot, Toulmin's social contract was undone. As usual local concerns were mixed with national issues. More unusual, however, was the number of new candidates who presented themselves for election. It was thought that in about half the wards a contest would take place. This was common for the more populous wards on the City's edge, but in central wards such as Cornhill and Cheap, the introduction of the secret ballot would, it was assumed, increase activity.²³ These were changes that had a great effect on City parliamentary politics throughout the period.

In the early 1860s, the election meeting was often the event that attracted most disorder. In a contest between the Liberal Western Wood and the 'Tory and turtle soup interests' of Lord Mayor Cubitt (1791-1863), tempers often became frayed. Cubitt was said to speak for the 'great' of the Corporation and Lombard Street, while Wood sought to champion the 'little man of the City of London'. The contest was not a personal one - both men being active members of the Court of Fishmongers' - but its exuberance did spill over to their respective supporters. After all, there must only have been the most subtle of differences between a 'Liberal-conservative' and a 'Conservative-liberal'. When the candidates attended a debate, it became the occasion of a physical fight between two members of the City of London Poor Law Board. Adjourned for the moment, the dispute continued at a subsequent meeting, where a knife was drawn.²⁴ Usually, these kind of attacks were directed towards Conservative candidates, pressing home perhaps the relative strength at this time of the Liberals in the wards, and the corresponding weakness of the Conservatives. In the General Election campaign of 1868, an 'uproarious' meeting was held in Portsoken ward, and attended by a large number of young Jewish men. Before the candidates could rise to speak, the disturbance was such that the Chairman was voted out and removed, or at the very least he 'volunteered to retire'. Ward elders such as Israel Woolf pleaded for calm, but cheers continued to be called for Gladstone, Bright and other worthy Liberals. The candidates were eventually allowed

²² Charles Welch, *Modern History of the City of London* (London, 1896), p.253-254.

²³ *City Press*, Wednesday, 21 December 1887.

²⁴ *City Press*, Saturday, 3 August 1861.

to speak, although at the end of the meeting trouble resumed. The official combatants fared little better at the second election meeting of the day at Coleman Street ward. Here, proceedings were described by the *City Press* as being of 'a very stormy character'.²⁵ This, of course, was the last election where the Liberals retained a three-to-one majority share of the four candidates returned to Parliament. It did not, however, seem like the end of an era. As the votes from the wards and those from the Livery franchise retrieved from the Guildhall were counted, thousands gathered outside in a scene that was described by contemporaries as 'exceedingly animated'. Between mid-day and four, the crowd turned its gaze to the Guildhall Tavern, the principal Committee Room of the Conservatives. Here 'as the state of the poll was issued hour after hour, the numbers were received with deafening cheers, which were renewed again and again'. Less attention was paid to the Liberal Committee Room in Cheapside, and whose poll returns were displayed on a wall at the rear of Honey Lane Market. If the silence attributed to the Liberals was a sign of their confidence in certain victory, the cheers aimed at the Conservatives were, more simply, sarcastic and ironic. One by one the defeated candidates 'were compelled to present themselves before the crowd from one of the windows of the Guildhall Tavern, and the bursts of cheering [with news from the state of the poll] were renewed over and over again'.²⁶ Liberal supporters would have been well advised to curtail their celebrations, if only they had known that the votes were to fall the other way in the watershed election of 1874.

This time in the run up to the election it was the Liberals who were the victims of disruption and intimidation. Campaigning in Tower ward, both sitting members George Joachim Goschen and Alderman Lawrence (-1897) were frustrated for a full fifteen minutes in their efforts to address their constituents. Indeed, their voices were drowned out by cries for 'Three Cheers for Disraeli'. Even the Chairman, Joseph Crosfield had to admit he had not experienced another meeting where Conservatives had been treated in the same way. When later the Liberal candidates arrived at a gathering of 500 supporters in the Cripplegate ward, Mr Goschen explicitly referred to the earlier

²⁵ *City Press*, Saturday, 14 November 1868.

²⁶ *City Press*, Saturday, 21 November 1868.

incident and accused an organised group of Conservative demonstrators of preventing the delivery of their speeches.²⁷

Liberals experienced similar problems in the election of 1880.²⁸ This time the streets and taverns of the City had taken on a quieter aspect, the first notable feature of the election. The only real evidence of a contest was the passing of four carriages bearing posters with the names of the candidates, and the parading on the streets of effigies of Conservative Alderman's Cotton (1822-1902) and Fowler. These figures bore the inscription, 'We don't want Tory Aldermen, but Liberals who will redress Irish Wrongs'. Handbills, profusely if silently, littered the street, warning the voters to 'Beware of the Confessional'. This was a clear reference to J. G. Hubbard, former Governor of the Bank of England and, by now, former sponsor of the Ritualist church of St. Albans, Holborn. It was another sponsor of a City church that recorded the first vote at the conclusion of the campaign. Sir Henry Peek of the Commercial Union and Goldsmiths' Company, was just the first in a flood of votes recorded by the ranks of the Livery Companies, which constituted the second major shift in the campaign. The third feature was the interest taken by those who were now employed at the heart of the City. In fact, it was reported from the Broad Street polling station how fifty men, all from the Stock Exchange, came to register their votes together. Lastly, but significantly, a large number of Jews were thought to have abstained from voting. The City of London, in the words of a victorious Conservative, J.G. Hubbard, had become the protector not just of civil and religious liberty, but, more accurately, 'of commercial, civil and religious liberty'.²⁹ This was becoming a category with which more established and increasingly successful Jewish businessmen could identify. Already the City Conservative Association reported record poll returns and party activity, and by 1886 the Liberals were refusing to publish the results of their efforts. The election of that year was not only won by the Conservatives, but also remained uncontested by their opponents.³⁰ The key to the Conservatives success, however, did not simply lie with their attention to organisation, but in the tenets of an increasingly sharp and well-defined ideology.

²⁷ *City Press*, Thursday, 5 February 1874. Was Reginald Hanson, Common Councillor and later to be Lord Mayor and Conservative grandee, the person referred to in newspaper reports of leading a 'band' of twenty Conservatives?

²⁸ *City Press*, Saturday, 27 March 1880.

²⁹ *City Press*, Saturday, 3 April 1880.

³⁰ *City Press*, Wednesday, 8 February 1882.

When Alderman Fowler was asked, in 1867, what the new national organisation should be called, he was in little doubt of his definition of Conservatism - 'the word 'constitutional' includes 'Conservative'. It seems to me that as constitutional in the larger term, as by adopting it we are able to take in a greater number than we might by the term 'Conservative', we should do well to adopt it'.

³¹ Ideologically, the Conservatives appeared to be not only the party of property, but also the party of constitutional and institutional defence. ³² This was a notion that ran through City elections of the period, and was instilled in the clubrooms of the City's rich and diverse associational life. The ultimate success of this strategy relied on an appropriation of the City's reputation as a place of liberality, of 'civil and religious liberty'. This is what a lone heckler addressed during an election meeting in 1868 when he shouted from the back of the schoolroom, Bishopsgate Yard, were they not all just in reality what he called 'Real Liberals'? ³³ What the heckler had referred to as real liberalism had manifested itself as Liberal-conservatism in the election of 1861 fought between Western Wood and Lord Mayor Cubitt. Later it would gain currency as a position for those whom, although they had converted to Conservatism, protested their enduring faith in Liberalism. It was not they who had changed, they insisted, but the party in which they used to believe. Alderman Cotton understood this when, in the election of 1874, he appealed to those who were fearful of Liberal attacks on the Corporation and the guilds as well as the overall pace of change: 'There were probably many persons present to support his candidature who were Liberals in the days of their youth, but who have seen all their dreams realised, and were now desirous of seeing whether we could not rest a little awhile (Hear, Hear)'. ³⁴ His call was answered by, amongst others, Common Councillor Butcher, who confirmed that: 'he had changed his views, he was an honest liberal. He voted for the Conservatives as he believed the Liberal government went too fast, too much inclined

³¹ (Bodleian Library) Conservative Party Archives, *First Meeting of the National Union of Conservative and Constitutional Associations held at Freemasons' Tavern, 12 November 1867*.

³² E. H. H. Green, *The Crisis of Conservatism. The politics, economics and ideology of the British Conservative party, 1880-1914* (London, 1995). Green places emphasis on Conservatism as being the party of property, the Empire and the Church, with the latter becoming less important.

³³ *City Press*, Saturday, 31 October 1868.

³⁴ *City Press*, Thursday, 5 February 1874.

to support dangerous measures, too hasty to upset old institutions'.³⁵ One commentator, looking back, summed up the general tone of political opinion in the City:

They were everlastingly being twitted that they were no longer Liberal; that they were turncoats. Nothing, however, was more fallacious. What the City was thirty years ago, that it was now. (Hear, hear). It was no more Conservative now than it was then. They were not about to give everything up to the destroyer. They merely did what everyone had the right to do - protect their own. The City had ever gone in for progression. No one could deny this. Therefore the City was as Liberal as ever. What a few years ago was considered Liberal was now Conservative.³⁶

Many Liberals, it appeared, were resting on a record that had brought many more people within the pale of the constitution, that was anti-war, that opposed big government and corruption, supported fiscal responsibility and free trade as well as civil and religious liberty. It was a common ploy of City Conservatives before 1874 to suggest that their values were similar to those of Liberalism, although it was also true that Conservatism in the City was indeed, philosophically at least, moving closer to a classical Liberal position. When melted down, it represented, in the defence of property and the constitution, an ideological stance that signalled a dramatic redefinition of the notion of liberty: a transformation that can be discerned in the careers of two Liberal Members of Parliament for the City of London, Lionel de Rothschild and George Joachim Goschen.

(iv)

When, as a Jew, Lionel de Rothschild was elected a City MP in a by-election in 1849, it was on a platform familiar to the City, namely that of civil and religious liberty. Re-elected in 1852, 1857, 1859, 1865, and 1869 he was increasingly returned on the grounds of an additional libertarian principle; as a representative of the rights and virtues associated with the accumulation of wealth. As a banker of the first rank, he stood alongside fellow Liberal members including the Prime Minister Lord John Russell and Alderman Sir James Duke. He did not, though, sit with his colleagues until the removal of Jewish disabilities in 1858. Yet remarkably, he was elected by the

³⁵ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 4953-3 *Minutes of the Bartholomew Club Tuesday, 10 February 1874*.

³⁶ *City Press*, Wednesday, 18 March 1885.

City's constituency time after time regardless of his inability to attend the Commons (there were prolonged periods when illness and business commitments kept him politically almost inactive), and despite the fact that electorally the constituency was not predominantly Jewish. Until the election of 1868 he was seen as 'the living embodiment of one of the great triumphs of religious liberty'.³⁷ On this occasion, however, it was thought that the introduction of the so-called minority vote would take one seat from the Liberals and give it to the Conservatives. As Rothschild was the least active of the four Liberal representatives - he had not spoken at a public meeting for five years - it was assumed that the reduction of votes cast from four to three would ensure his defeat. As expected, his name fell to the bottom of the list, and he was replaced by the Conservative Charles Bell. Bell explained that the Conservatives had only raised three candidates instead of four in the hope that Rothschild as 'a great member of the Jewish persuasion', would be returned: 'The principle of religious [liberty] was a most important one, and he hoped to see it upheld'. This act of apparent selflessness was confirmed at the end of the campaign by the Liberal Goschen in his victory speech, 'lest they should endanger the Baron's seat'.³⁸ Rothschild was defeated in this election, although he was returned in a by-election of 1869, caused by the death of Bell. By 1874, however, Rothschild was also advertised as 'the embodiment of the financial and commercial enterprise of the City'.³⁹ This illustrated, perhaps, that it was by now more important to elect a banker of international repute than a Jew on the grounds of religious liberty.

Yet in 1874, Rothschild had in fact gone down with all but one of the Liberals. The mood of the defeated party was bitter. How could the Jewish vote abandon them in such a marked way, especially as it was the Liberal party that had fought so hard for the removal of disabilities? Lionel Cohen, active member of the Conservative Association and member of the Stock Exchange, had a simple answer:

Why, the Jews were the most Conservative people in the world. If it had not been for Conservatism where would they have been. They would have been a scattered people. As they were united, and Conservative, and being a law-abiding people, they were prosperous in every land into which they went. But the Liberals said the

³⁷ *City Press*, Saturday, 10 October 1868.

³⁸ *City Press*, Saturday, 14 November 1868.

³⁹ *City Press*, Saturday, 13 January 1874.

Jews owed everything to them. Did not the present Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli do as much as any statesman to bring about the removal of the disabilities of the Jews? The Conservative Party had much gentlemanly feeling, and they would be sorry to keep down any denomination of any kind.⁴⁰

This was not an expression of an acute sense of good manners, although its part historically in Conservative psychology can not be underestimated, but represented a shift from a community seeking denominational liberty towards socially established individuals asking only for a meritocratic framework. If this was true in domestic circumstances, an older politics prevailed when Jews living in less liberal lands, were oppressed. Later, by the early 1880s, in pursuit of this principle, and in more general ways, the Conservatives lent their name to those supporting Jewish immigrants fleeing from Russia.⁴¹ City Conservatives, including by now the knighted Sir Robert Fowler, were active in 'The Society for the Relief of Persecuted Jews'. Indeed, earlier the Court of Common Council voted money to what they considered to be a worthy cause and an important principle, while the City of London Conservative Association, along with City clubs, passed motions protesting against abuses of civilised mores.⁴² The governing concern was for the rights and prospects of the individual by both a City and a nation that saw itself as the protector of this first liberal value. That civil and religious liberty was now conflated with the liberty of an individual to prosper, provided a new twist.

In this sense, and in others, City Conservatism had borrowed many of classical Liberalism's oldest clothes. A further example of this transition can be found in the career of George Joachim Goschen. Taking the seat of Western Wood, the last link to City radicalism, at a by-election in 1863, he was at the age of thirty-two singled out as an authority on financial matters. This reputation ensued a swift rise to the post of vice-president of the Board of Trade two years later, that he left in 1866 for the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster and a Cabinet post. In 1868 he was placed

⁴⁰ *City Press*, Thursday, 5 February 1874.

⁴¹ Harold Pollins, *A History of the Jewish Working Men's Club and Institute 1874-1912* (Oxford, Ruskin College Library Occasional Publication, 2, 1981); Sponsors included John Simon. M P who moved a motion to establish the Club and it was seconded by Lionel Cohen of the Stock Exchange. Sir David L. Salomons (1797-1873) similarly proposed a resolution appointing a provisional committee, and Henry A. Isaacs (1830-1909) seconded it.

⁴² This was the 'Jews in Russia Relief Fund' see, (C.L.R.O.) *Court of Common Council, Thursday, 2 February 1882*; A meeting in Guildhall was organised for 'The Society for the Relief of Persecuted Jews' in 1891, see Anne and Roger Cowen, *Victorian Jews Through British Eyes* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 128-130.

at the head of the Poor Law Board, and in March 1871 he became First Lord of the Admiralty. He had topped the poll in the City in 1868, but did worse in the election of 1874, although he still retained his seat. It soon became obvious that he could not survive in the City, and in any case by 1878 he felt out of sympathy with the City Liberal party.⁴³ He soon left, and fought the next election in Ripon. By the end of his life he had made the journey to Conservatism, by the Liberal Unionist route, leaving the Liberal party over 'high Imperial policy'. Goschen was indeed a 'Real Liberal'. He had been reluctant to support the Second Reform Act, was for the 'integrity of the Empire' and against Home Rule and the Irish Land Acts. Above all he was a strong advocate of the rights of property and opposed any idea of liberty based on equality. When he voted against the Third Reform Act in 1884 he did so in a way that was consistent with statements made at the very start of his parliamentary career in 1868:

The free trade battle, the fight of the interests against the monopoly of the few, the community at large against class legislation, was fought and won years ago; but the spirit of free trade, the championship of the common good against special interests pleaded in defiance of the public weal, still lived in the heart of the Liberal party and vivified its policy. (Cheers) While the successors of the Tory Protectionists (whatever imposing alias they might bear) still petted particular classes when they could, bribed particular localities, and governed in the spirit of factions and sects, instead of in the spirit of the nation at large, for the benefit of the whole community. (Cheers)⁴⁴

And in 1874:

Although everyone might not think it there was a certain amount of disguised Socialism abroad at the present moment. There were a number of wild, Utopian views being put about that the bulk of the Liberal past would, he believed, repel. They were not in harmony - that was his firm belief - with the traditions and sentiments of the English people. They were not always for Government interference, and for helping every class by giving them grants out of the public

⁴³ Thomas J. Spinner, *George Joachim Goschen. The Transformation of A Victorian Liberal* (Cambridge, 1973), p. 62.

⁴⁴ *City Press*, Saturday, 21 November 1868.

purse. The great bulk of the Liberals of England had no sympathy with Continental democracy.⁴⁵

Given this choice, Goschen like other 'Real Liberals', in the City and elsewhere, preferred the deep blue sea of Conservatism than the devil of modern, mass, democracy. The change in ideology and alliances, such as those demonstrated by Rothschild and Goschen, could no longer be observed in the wardmote or Inquest Committee but were articulated instead in the leather armchairs of the City's clubs and associations.

(v)

Commentators have remarked that municipal elections in the City during these years declined both in importance and in the numbers that were contested. In reality, both local problems and national issues were almost entirely worked out in and between the City's clubs and associations, rather, as it had been hitherto, played out before the entire population. When the wardmote was held at the end of the year it marked a full stop on proceedings, a rubber stamp on decisions already made. If the wardmote was now the last step, the clubs linked to the Conservative Party, both directly and indirectly, had become the first. These clubs were divided into three broad categories. The first were largely political, and included those inclined towards Conservatism such as the City of London Club (1832), the City Carlton (1868), the City Conservative (1884), the City Constitutional (1884), the New City Constitutional (1885) and, later Habitations of the Primrose League.⁴⁶ The second were mainly concerned with mutual aid, although their activities quite often spilled over into the social. Usually, they were a response to harsh economic conditions, dedicated to helping members in need and were often limited to people of equal standing within a particular profession.⁴⁷ Lastly, there were those that placed an emphasis on social intercourse but also ran a

⁴⁵ *City Press*, Saturday, 31 January 1874.

⁴⁶ Habitations of the Primrose League in the City were the City of London; the Corn Exchange; the City Carlton Club; the 'Marquis of Salisbury'; Tower and 'Lloyd's Patriotic'; See Martin Pugh, *Tories and the People* (Oxford, 1985), p.224.

⁴⁷ See, for example, the Drovers' Benevolent Institution. Its Chairman in 1844 was Common Councilman W. Malthouse and its Hall was built in 1874. Similarly the Bank Clerks' Club (1879), the City Amicable Club and the Peterson Club were made up of members of the staff of the Bank of England.

benevolent fund, or saw benevolence to each other as one of their functions. City Lodges of the Oddfellows or Freemasons' were the oldest examples of this idea.⁴⁸ Some others were identified with a particular ward such as Farringdon Without's City of London Tradesman's Club, the Bartholomew Club and the City Glee Club. Others again, were linked more formally to the established political machinery and thought of themselves as ward Clubs, Bishopsgate Ward Club is one instant, and the United Wards Club is another. Then there were those, like the Aldersgate Club although militantly parochial, saw themselves as other than an ordinary ward Clubs.⁴⁹

Most, or perhaps all, of the clubs and associations belonging to the City changed complexion during this period, floating between the three categories and sometimes belonging to none of them.⁵⁰ For instance, St. Dunstan's Club was revived in April 1851 and, as a former haunt of Wilkes, resumed its practice of casual gambling and earnest drinking. Other institutions, of similar vintage, such as the Candlewick Ward Club, started the period in this vein but reported by the mid-1870s that these habits had been entirely abandoned in recent years. As in the St. Dunstan's Club, social issues were now discussed. The Centenary Club maintained its pedigree and with the influx of new members added silky deference to aristocratic ease.⁵¹ Likewise, the City Glee Club became almost totally colonised by members of the City of finance and Conservative Association. Perhaps the most important feature of change was the declining integrity of the ward or neighbourhood. Like the United Wards Club, the Livery Club, although formed much later in 1914, took its membership from a wide area and its concerns from the whole City of London. Its

⁴⁸ Many senior City men appear to have been Freemasons'. It was estimated by the *City Press* that there were some sixty-six lodges operating in the square mile: 'We have Freemasons' numerously represented in the City Guilds, on the Aldermanic bench, in the Common Council, and among the high officers of the Corporation'; *City Press*, Saturday, 27 March 1875. See also (C.L.R.O.) *Box 1B 225B Sessions Papers - Freemasons Returns 1799-1848; Box 2 1860-1885*.

⁴⁹ The Aldersgate Club is an interesting example. It retained its rule that members should reside in the ward well into this century and activity only slowed by the First World War.

⁵⁰ For example, the City and Colonial Club; City's Waiter's Provident Protection Society; Grocers' and Tea Dealer's Benevolent Protection Society; City of London Truss Society; The Lark Pie Club; the London Excelsior Temperance Union; the General Post Office Total Abstinence Society; The Perfumer's Philanthropic Society; Mynheer Van Dunk Glee Club; The Carlyle Society; the Phonetic Shorthand Writer's Association; the Civic Lodge of Buffs; the 'warehouse meetings' of the City of London Total Abstiners' Union; and the John Carpenter Club.

⁵¹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 544-3 *Minutes of the Centenary Club, 20 May 1849*; Alderman Sir George Carroll on the occasion of meeting Prince Albert recalled how the Prince shook his hand saying 'you are always first with your strawberries'. It appears that Carroll sent strawberries to the Palace every year; see Nicholas Rodgers, 'Clubs and Politics in Eighteenth Century London: the Centenary Club of Cheapside' *London Journal*, 11, (Summer 1985), pp. 51-58.

membership was dependent on affiliation from any of the City Companies, and its aims and activities ranged from maintenance of the 'priceless City Churches' to a communal holiday scheme.

⁵² By the 1880s clubs and associations of almost every type and hue were combining informally:- drafting model resolutions, attending each others meetings, and even in 1882 suggesting to the Court of Common Council that Club resolutions should be allowed, constitutionally, to be debated and if passed to become Corporation policy without any further interference. ⁵³ Members of these clubs did not adhere to the company of others from the same occupation. Less often, as in the previous century, were clubs such as John's or Jonathan's dedicated to the needs of specialists, such as stockbrokers, or those like Sam's that became the headquarters of the South Sea Bubble clique. ⁵⁴ They were heavily patronised by Common Councillors, although those involved in City club life increasingly found themselves mixing, not with a neighbour or fellow citizen, but with their social equals. The Club, as a contemporary writer put it, was now 'a Conservative institution of modern times'. ⁵⁵ These were changes recognised by Alderman De Keyser (1832-1898) when he hosted a Jubilee Banquet to celebrate Victoria's reign at Crystal Palace in July 1887, and an occasion for the City Clubs to come together. In his speech the next Lord Mayor recognised two attributes shared by the company before him. Firstly, a devout respect for the constitution, its contribution to the Empire and its vital role in the maintenance of trade and commerce. Secondly, he saw them as nurseries for those intending to serve in a municipal or political capacity, whether it be in the Common Council or the House of Commons. While the former was celebrated in the officially linked Conservative clubs, the latter was pursued in those clubs concerned with sociability and mutual aid. All, however, from 1867 merged defence of the constitution with the protection of

⁵² Charles Graves *Leather Armchairs. The Chivas Regal Book of London Clubs, with a foreword by P. G. Wodehouse* (London, 1963), p.161.

⁵³ Thanks were recorded to those members who had supported the move. See G.L. (Mans) Ms. 11722-1 *Minutes of the United Wards Club, July 5, 1882*; (C.L.R.O.) *Minutes of the Court of Common Council, Thursday, 8 June 1882*.

⁵⁴ This was a vanishing past, much mourned by Edwardian nostalgists, see T. H. S. Escott, *Club Makers and Club Members* (London, 1914); Ralph Nevill, *London Clubs. Their History and Treasures* (London, 1911).

⁵⁵ Lieut-Col George James Ivey, *Clubs of the World: A General Guide or Index to the London and Country Clubs and those of Scotland, Wales, Ireland, U.K. Yacht Clubs, and British Colonial Possessions* (London, 1880).

property. And all, almost without exception, stood ideologically against the encroaching power of mass democracy.

(vi)

From its headquarters at 38 Threadneedle Street, the City Conservative Party had built a politics on defending the principles of the British constitution since the 1830s. Familiar City names such as Thomas Baring MP, along with a host of Alderman, had gathered at an Anniversary Dinner in April 1836 at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, to celebrate its glories. The City of London Club, likewise, had the Crown, Church, Union and Empire as the four pillars of its doctrine.⁵⁶ Conservatives had always recognised the importance of sociability, mutual sympathies, and friendship, to their creed. The club like the Livery Company, therefore, was the place where this idea was expressed and where its forces could be mustered to defend its interests and evangelise its values. Neither 'Real Liberals' nor, later, Conservatives, believed in the perfect society but the club or association was the nearest a flawed humanity could come to occupying a moral space, unsullied by the marks of rapacious living. Robert Fowler understood this function. He was an early Chairman of the City of London Club and of the City Carlton Club that opened its premises at 83 King William Street in November 1868 with an initial membership of just 220. He was also President of the local Association. These were separate organisations, he insisted, with differing purposes:- the first dedicated as a nuclei for City Conservatives to meet and promote their common interests, the second devoted its energies to canvassing and registering potential voters. Only at the time of an election did ideology and organisation crystallise and City Conservatives campaign jointly for the return of representatives of the 'Constitutional party'.⁵⁷ This they did with great mastery until, due to an increase in membership, they were forced to move to a new building situated between St. Swithen's and Sherbourne Lanes. Here, on a site leased from the Grocers' Company and formerly

⁵⁶ *City of London Conservative Association* (London, 1835) ; J. Owen Unwin, *City of London Club. Notes on its History and Traditions* (London, 1922).

⁵⁷ Barry Phelps, *Power and the Party. A History of the Carlton Club 1832-1982* (Macmillan, 1983).

occupied by the European Bank, a new club was commissioned.⁵⁸ With approximately 1,000 members, the new City Carlton became, in due course, the beating heart of City Conservatism.

In its guts, however, it had ingested many of the old Liberal convictions. At every point where Conservatism renewed itself, the defence of the constitution was wrapped up with the defence of property. When Salisbury paid a visit to the City Carlton Club he made just this point. He saw the City of London as the place where detractors of both concentrated their fire.⁵⁹ The City Constitutional Club reported a membership of between 800 and 1,000 when it opened in 1884 as another citadel against radical, New Liberal and Socialist opinion. The City Conservative Club was opened in the same year, and once more the City itself was placed as a bulwark against hostile forces. The City, it was reasoned, had defended the liberties of the people against despotic monarchs, and would now do so from government ministers and democrats that once again, in another way, threatened the constitution. Salisbury had already argued that 'the word 'Liberal' under the guidance of those who now control the party has entirely lost and changed its meaning'. Others went further, and many believed 'that the Conservative party was sufficiently permeated with the real and proper principle of Liberalism that it would not abolish for the sake of abolishing'.⁶⁰ The following year, in 1885, the New City Constitutional Club was inaugurated. As a limited registered club it had a share capital of £25,000 but had debts from a previous company that required that they should issue stock to the 1,500 or so potential members as ten-shilling shares. As a result, many newcomers were a little too cosmopolitan for the comfort of the more orthodox, but fears were assuaged when these comparative strangers agreed to gather around the constitutional standard. As one of many figures from the City of London Corporation heavily involved in all these projects, Alderman Knill (1824-1898) put it this way: 'many who were not nominally Conservatives would stand shoulder to shoulder with them in upholding the old institutions in restoring God to the schools, and in maintaining the integrity of the Empire'.⁶¹ It was time, or so he thought, 'for

⁵⁸ *City Press*, Saturday, 1 June 1878; The architects were Messrs. Perry and Co. of Bow, and it was designed by R. Roberts at a cost of £27,000. Built to accommodate 1,200 members it boasted a 70 feet by 26 feet coffee room, a reading room, two billiard rooms, smoking, card, and private rooms and sleeping accommodation for thirty servants.

⁵⁹ *City Press*, Saturday, 24 November 1883.

⁶⁰ *City Press*, Wednesday, 13 February 1884.

⁶¹ *City Press*, Saturday, 19 December 1885.

property to combine', and for Conservatism to make a principled stand in defence of the constitution, for as long as the Tower Habitation of the Primrose League determined 'that wicked old man remained in power'.⁶²

In the main clubs began to speak for the newly enfranchised ratepayer, although they had long enjoyed an influence on the Corporation. As early as 1859 the Bartholomew Club arranged a canvass of the constituency in order to secure the return of their preferred candidate. However, when clubs demanded 'an account of their stewardship', elected Common Councillors were inclined to recall their treasured independence.⁶³ After 1867, nevertheless, the ratepayer sitting in his club demanded action on issues affecting the pocket. Nowhere was this more true than the perceived wasted expenditure of the London School Board. Each of the four City members of the London School Board represented 27,067 people and £601,338 worth of rateable property, in an area of 184 acres.⁶⁴ Despite returning at least one Progressive, Miss Rosamond Davenport-Hill, City stalwarts demanded value for money, far from convinced that public education was an unqualified good.⁶⁵ One sitting member, speaking to the City of London Tradesman's Club, insisted that he would 'pledge himself to a persistent advocacy of economy in the administration of the ratepayers' money in the education of the humbler classes, for whom we desire an education consistent with the position they are to occupy in life's social scale'.⁶⁶ Towards the end of the period this was more or less the stance of the City Corporation.⁶⁷

Now often limiting the numbers of their membership, the clubs articulated a wholly different language. Common Councillor Joseph Newbon, founder of the United Wards Club, put it in a Conservative nutshell: 'the Club was founded on the principles of loyalty to the Queen and Country, loyalty to the Corporation of the City of London, loyalty and goodwill to each other and above all

⁶² *City Press*, Wednesday, 21 April 1886.

⁶³ *City Press*, Saturday, 24 January 1880.

⁶⁴ George Henry Money, *Synopsis of the Elementary Education Act, 1870, with an introduction and digest, to which is added a coloured map of the London School Board District etc.* (London, 1870).

⁶⁵ See Jane Martin, *The Role of Women in the Education of the Working Classes 1870-1904* (Unpublished Ph.D., Open University, 1991). See also Thomas Gautrey, *'Lux Mihi Laus' School Board Memories* (London, n.d.). I am grateful to Jane Martin for alerting me to this source.

⁶⁶ *City Press*, Saturday, February 26 1881; reported a meeting of the City of London Tradesmen's Club.

⁶⁷ (C.L.R.O.) *Minutes of the Court of Common Council, Thursday, 12 February 1884.*

loyalty to ourselves'.⁶⁸ Indeed it was Newbon who proposed, and his Common Council colleague Mr Bonnewell who seconded, a proposal that sought to extend the municipal and parliamentary franchise to Directors of Public and Private Joint Stock Companies.⁶⁹ It was defeated, although it shows that the ethos and practice of the finance City was creeping into parts of the City where it had once been denied.

By the time the 'Socialistic' bands of the unemployed 'nuisance' had entered the City in 1886 and again in 1887, they were walking on Conservative territory and behind enemy lines. In the first instance the concern was for the loss of property, and as shops had closed on most of the main thoroughfares, for the welfare of business too. The Lord Mayor had already agreed to a request from the London United Working Men's Committee to start a 'Mansion House Fund for the Relief of the Unemployed'. The first meeting of the committee charged with managing, but not distributing the monies, met just a few days before a riot on 11 February 1886.⁷⁰ The next morning an estimated crowd of 400 assembled outside the Lord Mayor's official residence hoping to make personal applications. It attracted support from all parts of the City - members of Lloyds alone donated £1,000 - and money was found in a box left outside the Mansion House, the Fund finally closed in April with the balance standing at £77,910. It had been estimated that before its end the thirty-four local committees charged with distributing the money under the umbrella of the 'Society for the Relief of Distress and the Metropolitan Visiting and Relief Association' had distributed relief among 34,849 families.⁷¹ It was thought that some committees, often allowed free rein, were visiting up to 4,000 cases a week.⁷² The larger point, however, was that the City and its Lord Mayor had given a national focus to the City and represented it as a coherent whole. It was a different kind of coherence than that experienced when the City deliberated its problems in wardmotes and Inquest Committees rather than in clubs and associations. Thus when trouble began again in the following November, some older denizens made a comparison with the Chartist threat to the City in 1848:

⁶⁸ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 11722-1 *Minutes of the United Wards Club, Thursday, 15 January 1878.*

⁶⁹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 11722-1 *Minutes of the United Wards Club, Wednesday, 12 October 1878.*

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 4 February 1886.

⁷¹ *The Times*, Saturday, 13 March 1886.

⁷² *The Times*, Saturday, 27 February 1886.

Therefore it was very desirable that those who had interests at stake should show themselves willing to do their duty as they had done in the past. He himself, in 1848, went down to Blackfriars Bridge as a Special Constable when the Chartists were out, and they showed them then they did not intend to stand any nonsense. And he felt sure that the citizens would do the same again, and demonstrate to these demonstrators that they did not intend their hearths and homes to be upset, and their business driven to the winds, simply to please a few noisy scoundrels.⁷³

The 'interests at stake' then, in 1848, were different from those existing in 1886. In fact, the gathering of citizens in the wardmotes had been completely usurped by the movement of the ratepayer interest. In the course of this movement 'Real Liberals' had been transformed into modern Conservatives. Hence, when support was requested from club members for the Fabian Society's Eight Hour Day Bill coming before Parliament, it was rejected. One member of the Bishopsgate Ward Club thought the measure 'absurd' and another 'idiotic'. Common Councillor Greenaway believed the Fabian Society to be 'the biggest lot of jackasses in creation'. Another 'hoped that in future the Club would be freed from discussion relating to the Fabian Society'.⁷⁴ He need not have worried as the subject was never raised again.

⁷³ Speaking at the United Wards Club, see *City Press*, Saturday, 19 November 19 1887; See also *Pall Mall Gazette*, 37, Tuesday, 15 November 1887.

⁷⁴ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5127 *Minutes of the Bishopsgate Ward Club, Wednesday, 10 December 1890.*

Chapter Five

The City, Liberty, Imperialism and the State

As we have seen, encouraged by changes to the City's constitution from the 1830s, the City's 'Real Liberalism' evolved through its relationship with the state in the promotion of technical education, and matured within its associational life after 1867. Thereafter it would blossom in the pursuit of its imperialist goals. Now, although individual members of the Corporation affected civic values, their pose was unconvincing. As businessmen and politicians, they argued their self-interest certainly, but it was in the language of an older civic virtue. This revealed their dual identities as elected civic representatives and representatives of the financial City, links found in Appendix Two. As this chapter will argue, these roles were played out in the 'London Chambers of Commerce', some of its Imperialist relations such as the 'Naval League', as well as organisations such as the 'Liberty and Property Defence League'.

In previous chapters it has been described how the City's politics were re-made. The move away from a politics necessarily linked with a resident population, was towards one concerned with property interests. This new alliance manifested itself within Ratepayers' Associations in Chapter Two, within Livery Companies in Chapter Three and within City Clubs in Chapter Four. All conspired to move the City towards Conservatism. This was the result of a divided Liberalism. Philosophically the City had departed from Toulmin's inclusive model of citizenship, to one that was exclusive and based upon the defence of both property and constitution. This was not because of the disappearance of a resident community through de-population, or because radicalism had lost its constituency as it has been previously suggested. Indeed, as we saw in the first chapter, the City's working heart was pluralistic throughout the period. Besides, as we have also witnessed, the numbers able to vote in municipal and parliamentary elections actually increased, not decreased, in the course of the City's physical changes. In short, it was a constituency transformed not replaced. What was profoundly different, (another theme of previous chapters) was a changing approach to what constituted the idea of liberty. The overall purpose of this chapter then, is to explore further the City's ideological underpinnings.

A stall was set out on behalf of the City, or at least how the City was imagined, in 1848:

True Liberty does not consist in the power to do everything at pleasure, careless of others. It consists in the power and right to do what each one wills, so long and for as, in so doing, the equal power and rights of others are not encroached on. It is, in short, the recognition of mutual rights and obligations, and the maintenance of these mutual rights and obligations, in opposition to mere selfishness. Despotism and licentiousness are equally antagonistic to liberty. Each implies the supremacy of selfishness. The value of National existence and Free institutions lies in maintaining the fullest freedom of action to every individual, consistent with the like freedom of his neighbour; and the fullest independence to each local community, consistent with the like independence of its neighbours. This consideration - fundamental as it is to all questions of internal legislation - is too often forgotten.¹

This statement by Toulmin, recalled by the journal of the 'Personal Rights Association', (1871-1965) served as a declaration of one half of the 'left-wing' of the Individualist perspective.² The emphasis here was on an anti-statism, but one that tried to apply the classical ideal of equality before the law to a polity that disallowed, except in cases of extreme utility, legislation that would effect the economy. Beginning life as the 'Vigilance Association for the Defence of Personal Rights And for the Amendment of the Law wherein it is Injurious to Women', its anti-centralisation credentials were beyond doubt. In its early days it campaigned against state coercion implicit in the Contagious Diseases Acts of the 1860s as well as arguing against compulsory vaccination laws. Like the later campaigns against legislation in matters of labour contracts that constrained women vocationally, and in particular the legislative restrictions placed on female labour, it believed that state action and personal responsibility were irreconcilable. Attracting some of the early suffragettes like Elizabeth Wolstenholme, older followers of Mazzini, and figures such as the co-operator George Holyoake, George Howell, Charles Bradlaugh and Joseph Arch, its main text was J.S. Mill's *On Liberty* (1859). Like the City of London Corporation, the Association was concerned to ascertain the proper limits of power albeit, in the case of the Corporation, from a Whig viewpoint. State action was necessarily class or aristocratic action and as such would have been traditionally linked with the Court party.

¹ *Personal Rights Journal*, July 1890.

² Edward Bristow, *The Defence of Liberty and Property in Britain, 1880-1914* (Unpublished Ph.D., 1970), see chapter 2 'The Personal Rights Association and the Defence of Liberty'. Kindred organisations included the Personal Liberty Club (1880) and the State Resistance Union (1882).

After all, the championing of civil and religious liberty and the working of the ward system that encouraged the exercise of personal rights and responsibilities, was what had first attracted Toulmin to the meetings of Farringdon Without wardmote in the 1840s and 1850s. However, as the century wore on, the City's libertarian stance changed perceptibly. It did not stop talking about liberty, but rather altered what it meant by the term. Within these circumstances Joseph Hiam Levy (1838-1913), Professor of Birkbeck College and lecturer at the City of London College, retailed the Vigilance Association into the 'Personal Rights Association', less concerned with the individual rights of women and the collective rights of labour, and more preoccupied with the general defence of the citizen from centralising agencies.³ The concern now was to define the limits of state power and the place of the majority in the age of democracy. With the formation of the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' in July 1882, mainly located on the right-wing of the Conservative Party, property took the side of Individualism. Given the choice between the rights of property and the claims of the masses the City, previously seen as a prime example of participatory democracy, came down in favour of property.

The 'Personal Rights Association' and the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' shared a common membership by the 1880s. Levy was a friend and admirer of Mill (as an advocate of land nationalisation, he served with him on the Land Tenure Committee) and was close to both E. Belfort Bax and George Bernard Shaw. Describing himself as a Ricardian in economics and an Individualist in politics, he was the only member of the group, besides Wordsworth Donisthorpe (1847-1914), the local government expert, still arguing the republican and democratic case into the 1890s.⁴ Instead most activists looked to the 'prophet' Herbert Spencer for inspiration. His book, *Man versus the State* (1884), attracted many to the 'right-wing' Individualist fold.⁵ Amongst them

³ The constitution stated its intention 'to effect the repeal or amendment of existing laws which directly or indirectly violate the principle of personal right or of perfect equality before the law'. This translated into opposition to the Registration of Births and Deaths Act (1874), Infant Life Protection Act (1874), Teachers Registration Bill (1879), Prison's Act (1879), and as far as they imposed on women's 'freedom of industry', the Factory and Workshops Act. See, *Journal of the Vigilance Association for the Defence of Personal Rights*, January 1881. They also opposed corporal and capital punishment.

⁴ For an interesting and valuable insight into historical Individualism and a fuller discussion of Donisthorpe's importance as the League's expert on local government see M. W. Taylor, *Men Versus the State - Herbert Spencer and Late Victorian Individualism* (Oxford, 1992).

⁵ Some of its anti-democratic theorists included William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty* (London, 1896); Sir Henry Maine, *Early History of Institutions* (London, 1878); and written as a reply to Mill's *On Liberty*, James Fitzjames Stephen, *Liberty Equality Fraternity* (London, 1879).

we can count at least four Lord Mayors who were active in the League: Aldermen's Ellis, Knight, Dimsdale, and Cotton. By the 1890s the visions of liberty offered by the 'Personal Rights Association' of the 1870s and that of the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' of the 1880s, for the most part, could no longer be said to be competing.⁶ From the writings of Spencer came a three-part doctrine: an adherence to laissez-faire economics; a defence of the proprietary right of the individual to self and property, and the notion that a competitive society was the key to social progress. This was the text of late nineteenth-century Individualism. Its context was the nation's continuing economic malaise, the resultant social problems, and the response to them from both New Liberalism and New Unionism.⁷

Most of those connected with the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' took their liberalism from Adam Smith, the early philosophical radicalism of Bentham, Mill the elder, Cobden, Bright and Molesworth.⁸ As M.J. Lyons, one of its members, protested at a meeting of the North London Working Men's Club, and as it was reported in the *Clerkenwell Press*, they were 'Let Us Alone' radicals. Looking to the free-trade victory of 1846, to freedom of association and to the removal of burdens from the press, they abhorred the meddling interventionism of New Liberalism:

These [modern Radicals] have ornamented or disfigured the statute book by a series of acts which restrict freedom of contract, and are all framed with the benevolent intention of protecting men and women against the punitive results of their own folly. The party known successively by the names Whig, Liberal and Radical, after having been for ages the champions of freedom, the apostles of liberty, have begun to retrace their steps, and to substitute for the tyranny of an individual [the Crown] or a class [aristocracy] for the tyranny of the majority.⁹

⁶ For the plethora of Individualist organisations and periodicals in the late nineteenth century see Norbert S. Seldon, 'Individualist Periodicals - The Crisis of Late Victorian Liberalism' *Victorian Periodicals Newsletter*, 6, (1973), pp. 17-26.

⁷ (*P.P.*) *Report of the Royal Commission into the Depression of Trade and Industry (1886)*. Less than enthusiastic about Free Trade, the nearest the Commission appeared to get to the City was an interview with a Mr George Gribble of Messrs. Cook, Sons and Company, clothing suppliers of St. Paul's Churchyard, Thirteenth Day Wednesday, 10 February 1886.

⁸ There are problems using Adam Smith as the fountain of liberal ideology, see Donald Winch, 'Economic Liberalism as Ideology: The Appleby Version' *Economic History Review*, xxxviii, 2, May, (1985), pp. 287-297.

⁹ M. J. Lyons, *Radicalism and Ransom - Reprinted from the Clerkenwell Press, July 22, 1885 in the Lecture Hall of the North London Working Men's Club* (London, 1885).

Here, encased for public view, was the fear of both representative and 'pure' democracy. Rather than taking the path of popular reform, as old or classical Liberals they shared the belief that the institutions of production and distribution were organic organisations, controlled by natural laws. Thus they sought to discover (like natural scientists) the laws which would govern, and then limit the life of the state organism. It was concluded that the Reform suggested by New Liberalism was both useless and damaging to the given balance of society. It followed that legislative action, even on the pretext of a worthy cause, should be resisted. Not only was increased state intervention seen as an unfortunate extension of democracy, it posited an opposite: on the one side was the rights (natural or otherwise) of the majority, and on the other property and enterprise. Both sides of a divided liberalism shared a Benthamite concern for the extent of government rather than its form. In laying claim to a liberalism of free markets and minimal state interference, one commentator has argued that the necessity of adopting a politically-conservative stance in order to preserve the late Victorian social order meant that Individualists had abandoned both rationality and the ambitions of a just and humane society.¹⁰ History was travelling Individualism's way, and represented what Spencer termed the evolving 'industrial' society, while Socialism would mean a return to a more primitive, 'militant' society. Either way, while anti-collectivist and anti-Socialist, the Individualists ensured that they became defenders of not only property and the constitution, but also by doing so, the champions of the status quo.¹¹

This then was the intellectual milieu in which the City of London found itself immersed in the 1880s.¹² Already stunned by state interest in the City Corporation and necessarily resolved to oppose the Liberal party, the City's Livery Companies were bewildered by the threat to their

¹⁰ Taylor, *Man Versus the State*, pp. 68, 39. The core beliefs of the Individualist were (i) believe in progress as the 'law of all human institutions', (ii) the ability of human reason to discern these laws (iii) agnostic on the divine nature of the social system (iv) in favour of 'civil equality' before the law (v) belief not in order and authority but the liberty of the individual.

¹¹ This was a twin concern that culminated in the British Constitutional Association (1907) and the Anti-Socialist Union (1908). See also Thomas Mackay (ed.) *A Plea for Liberty- An Argument Against Socialism and Socialistic Legislation* (London, 1891), see especially the introduction by Spencer, 'From Freedom to Bondage'.

¹² Lord Pembroke 'An Address To The Liberty And Property Defence League; With A Word To The Conservative Party - Delivered at the Annual Meeting of the Liberty and Property Defence League at the Westminster Palace Hotel, June 24' *National Review*, v, (1885), p. 796, 'We are passing through one of those epochs in the history of nations in which new departures are taken which vitally affect the destiny of the country and the future of its political parties. Political opinion is in a state of solution. Both parties have lost faith in many of their old maxims'.

property expressed in the Royal Commission on the subject in 1885. Therefore when the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' held their inaugural meeting they did so with the City's full attention and with the support of twenty Livery Companies.¹³ As one of its leading advocates and former member of the Adullamite Cave who opposed the 1867 Reform, Lord Elcho (the 10th Earl of Wemyss as he became), had already befriended the guilds by opposing the Liberal party on the Irish Land Question. Furthermore he had defended Livery Company property managed through the Irish Society, and opposed the reorganisation of City charities and endowments.¹⁴ Lord Bramwell was also a member and had given evidence to the Commission on the plight of the Livery Companies, a *cause célèbre* with the League. Stunned into action by the publication of Henry George's *Progress and Poverty* (1882), the defence of City property became a consistent theme both before and after the Royal Commission made its report:

This is the nature of the attack on the Livery Companies' property - not on that part of it which is coupled with a trust for that has long been administered under the supervision of the Charity Commissioners, but on that part of which is absolutely the property of the Guilds, as much as the property of the Athenaeum Club is the property of that Institution; as much as the coins we have in our pockets today in this room are the property of the respective persons who carry them ..and yet this proposition of confiscation is looked upon complacently by many, on the ground that a better one could be made of this property. Dangerous doctrine! Would it stop! When once the boundary has been overstepped, the succeeding progress becomes extremely easy: Inns of Court, Colleges, Clubs, and then private owners.

15

To many it was at this point that the thrust of a reformist Liberalism turned into theft. Others too spoke in opposition to the proposed Corporate Property Security Bill which, although aimed at the

¹³ Edward Bristow, 'The Liberty and Property Defence League and Individualism' *Historical Journal*, xviii, 4, (1975), pp. 761-789.

¹⁴ In return he was given the Freedom of the Framework Knitters' Company. He also sought to create an anti-Gladstonian coalition by extending help and friendship to leaders of labour.

¹⁵ Sir Frederick Bramwell, *State Monopoly or Private Enterprise? An Address delivered at the Second Annual Meeting of the Liberty and Property Defence League* (London, 1884).

City Companies following the Royal Commission, would have had a scatter gun effect on clubs and societies that enjoyed a similar legal existence.¹⁶

By the 1890s the League itself had grown along with the contribution of City figures to it. At least seventy federated associations were attracted to its cause, ranging from a City Branch to others throughout England, Scotland, Ireland, America, Australia, France, New Zealand, Germany and Italy. As the proclaimed 'White International' it was raised as the self-conscious alternative to its Communist counterpart.¹⁷ Yet despite the presence at the 1890 annual meeting of Aldermen Cotton and Dimsdale and Liverymen George Palmer and Dr. Charlton Lane of the Mercers', not to mention the Goldsmiths' own Walter Prideaux, whose firm of accountants acted as auditors, we are left with the impression that the City's contribution may have been even greater.¹⁸ Besides the obvious common material interests, the two institutions shared a political stance. Insofar as the League professed a strict avoidance of party politics and a resolution to avoid any kind of constitutional reform, it coincided with the City's insistence on the qualities of political independence, personal conscience before party discipline, and a preference for the older Whig idea of virtual democracy. This is not to say that mainstream City opinion advanced in unison. In fact the League had complained about the attack made by the City Corporation on the New River Company which had threatened to lower water prices in the City. The suggested scale of charges would have also led, it was argued, to the Company's inability to pay dividends to its shareholders, and in turn to the confiscation of property:

¹⁶ M.J. Lyons, *Progress or Plunder - Delivered at the Islington Liberal Club, Camden Passage* (London, 1885). Other tracts include M. J. Lyons, 'The City Companies and Their Traducers' *The Liberty Review: A Weekly Journal Devoted to the Defence of Freedom and the Right of Property* January, 13, (1894).

¹⁷ Some of the interests attracted to the League included Mining Associations, the Iron Trades Employers' Association, the Chamber of Shipping, the Licensed Victuallers' National Defence League, the Manchester Cotton Spinners' Association, a number of railway companies and representatives from labour such as the Northumberland Miners' Permanent Relief Fund. For one of the more notable contributors to the League see, Albert V. Tucker, 'W. H. Mallock and Late Victorian Conservatism' *University of Toronto Quarterly*, xxvi, (1962), pp. 223-241.

¹⁸ David Dudley Field, *The Duties of the State - An American View of Government Interference - Delivered at the Eighth Annual Meeting of the Liberty and Property Defence League* (London, 1890); 'Unfortunately, and unknowingly, we fixed upon Lord Mayor's Day for our meeting, and I am sorry to say that, in consequence, a great many our friends have been prevented from coming, have been stopped by the crowd in the way and are unable to be present'.

As a citizen and a staunch upholder of the Corporation, I say unfeignly, and without any figure of speech, that I do not know when I have been more shocked than when I was having this proposition brought before me, and I look upon the rejection of that Bill on its second reading by the House of Commons, to be one of the very few consolations that body now affords to those who respect liberty and property.

19

The testimony of another League supporter might also add weight to the sense that the thoughts and actions of the City were far from being uniform or universal. Seeking to emphasise that he was not, as it were, a creature of the City, M. J. Lyons, a League member, recalled that: 'the only transaction he had ever had with any of the City Companies was when he endeavoured to rent one of their houses for an Individualist Club, and they refused to let it to him, considering his programme too democratic, if not revolutionary'.²⁰ This said, the City continued to lend support to Individualist organisations. After the formation of the London County Council in 1889 and the creation of a Progressive-Socialist coalition, the League began a programme of co-operation with the organisation of great ground landlords, the 'Property Protection Society'. On this occasion the Goldsmiths' Company agreed to contribute £100 annually, and in total twenty City Companies enrolled. Likewise the 'London Ratepayers' Defence League', formed to resist the taxation of land values, also opposed the London County Council as well as the London School Board, and was inaugurated by the Lord Mayor, Sir Joseph Savory (1815-1888) in November 1891.²¹ It was succeeded in 1894 by the Conservative 'London Municipal Society' in which the Corporation played a full part. The City, then, had subscribed, with various degrees of enthusiasm, to a political world that had at its core constitutional conservatism and the defence of property. It was these two factors, that had been separated in an earlier radical City, but which now confirmed a new situation and a fresh politics. These were both elements, moreover, that informed the City's attitude towards and involvement in the Institute of Bankers', the 'London Chamber of Commerce' and organisations such as the 'Navy League', all of which were associated with the New Imperialism.

¹⁹ Sir Frederick Bramwell, *'State Monopoly or Private Enterprise'*, p. 10.

²⁰ M. J. Lyons, *'Progress or Plunder'*, pp. 22, 23.

²¹ Norbert C. Solden, *Laissez-Faire on the Defence: The Story of the Liberty and Property Defence League, 1882-1914* (Unpublished Ph.D., 1969) p. 235; Avner Offer, *Property and Politics 1870-1914: Landownership, Ideology, and Urban Development in England* (Cambridge, 1981) p. 301.

Anticipating the 'technical education scares' of the 1880s, the 'Made in Germany' panics of the 1880s and 1890s and the 'American Peril' of the 1900s, the City became wobbly on the principle of free trade. Having liberated its tariffs by reforming the Corn Laws in 1846, Britain now felt the heat of competition from Germany and America. For many years Britain and the City had, in contrast to its protectionist competition, progressed towards what was regarded as a classical liberal ideal, which although thought by Adam Smith himself to be utopian, occupied the imaginations of City elders. In this model, free trade took economic and moral precedence over mercantilism. The actions of the rational individual were the engine of change and the respect for the rights of contract bonded both society and nations together. To trade with another man or country was an act of peace and goodwill. The act of free trade itself attacked vested interests and monopolies, separated politics and commerce, and conferred benefits to the people such as cheap food. Of course, to those not up with the race, the City of London was the centre of a conspiratorial monopoly of international usury: Protestant and philosemitic and tolerant to an unproductive class of bankers and merchants. The anxiety to preserve free trade throughout the world was not a fulfilment of the Liberal ideal at all, but just one way of restricting the economic development of agricultural nations.²²

In any case by 1879 the openly protectionist policy of Germany led to an asking, once again, of the free trade question. Only three years earlier a citizen of the City had felt moved to write a letter to the editor of the *City Press* asking for a statue to be erected to Adam Smith in front of the Royal Exchange, as a bronze effigy of Sir Robert Peel already took pride of place in Cheapside.²³ This though was not quite the mood of a meeting convened in the great hall of the Cannon Street Hotel. The subject, on this occasion, was 'The Depression of Trade, Free Trade and Co-operative Stores'. The object of the meeting was to petition Parliament against 'one-sided Free Trade which

²² Bernard Semmel, *The Liberal Ideal and the Demons of Empire - Theories of Imperialism from Adam Smith to Lenin* (Baltimore, 1993), esp. chapter five 'The International Usury of Finance Capital'; Semmel emphasises the anti-Semitism directed towards the City of London as a focus of Jewry and liberal tolerance. According to European detractors, if Jewry was part of a global conspiracy, so too was Britain; See also for an exposition of the classical liberal ideal, Donald Winch, *Classical Political Economy and Colonies* (Suffolk, 1965).

²³ *City Press*, Saturday, 10 June 1876.

aided by co-operative stores, enables producers to supply British consumers direct to the injury ultimately of all classes'. One enterprising and far-sighted person insisted that 'what was wanted was more customers [and] ..new customers, and [he was therefore] glad to see that a meeting was recently held for the purpose of opening South Africa'. Likewise the Revd. Gurney called for a system of what Joseph Chamberlain as Colonial Secretary, would call imperial preference or the protection of goods within the Empire. Significantly, these views were defeated, and the man of the cloth was even rebuked, ironically, for speaking disparagingly of John Bright.²⁴

With the initiative that Germany had taken in 1879, designed to win the support of all classes in that country by protecting agrarian interests as well as those of heavy industry, the representatives of the City refused to sanction a 'Reciprocity' meeting in Guildhall. Indeed, Lord Mayor Sir Charles Whetham (1812-1885) explicitly denied leave for it to be used for this purpose. The 'top' of the City, like its citizens concerned with the actions of the consumer combinations of the co-operative stores, was determined that the City would not be identified with any movement against free trade:

At a time when Germany is about discussing the question of increasing her import duties, the effect of which must be injurious to our export trade, it is simply putting a weapon into the hands of Prince Bismarck to enable him to inform the deputies in the Reichstag that in the City of London, the very centre of Free Trade institutions, a meeting has just been held in favour of the re-establishment of protective duties.

²⁵

Of course, the worst fears of the old liberals were not realised. Every part of the City, although alarmed, stuck to what had become a popular faith of economic and moral life. Accordingly, as a recent commentator has noted, the bankers and merchants of the City of London remained loyal to free trade not least because they believed in Britain's role as a centre of finance and commerce, or 'a brain in the body of a cosmopolitan international economy'.²⁶

²⁴ *City Press*, Saturday, 8 March 1879.

²⁵ *City Press*, Wednesday, 12 February 1879.

²⁶ Semmel, *The Liberal Ideal*, p. 111.

Other more contemporaneous observers rejected the Spencean biological metaphor in favour of the idea of the City as a machine - a mechanism in which banking, for example, should enjoy the status of a science.²⁷ When the challenge from Germany and others became clear, the need to educate key professionals in order to compete became obvious and stark. The responsibility fell predictably and, in line with classical liberal dogma, to the individual voluntarist spirit and not to the centralised and collectivist state. In this respect, a 'Banking Institute' had already been convened by a meeting held at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate on 25 November 1851. This organisation, with Lord Mayor Alderman Challis (1794-1874) as its Honorary Officer, only lasted for a period of two years. But it was this kind of voluntarism, given extra urgency by the economic situation, that prompted the inaugural meeting of the Institute of Bankers that took place on 11 March 1879. The Executive membership had been determined by a meeting held in May of the previous year at the London Institute and attended by the private banker Alderman Robert Fowler. Then a system of professional examinations and lectures had been agreed. Fast growing and immediately influential, vice-presidents of the 1,944 strong organisation included Alderman Lusk (Imperial Bank) and Alderman Waterlow (Union Bank of London) while Fowler was President of the Institute between 1889-91.²⁸ It appeared that the wheels of the machine, in this instance at least, were in need of a little oil.

It was this tilt to reform that informed the establishment of the 'London Chamber of Commerce' in October 1881, as well as a need to re-instate the City's free trade position. At a meeting called by Lord Mayor McArthur (1809-1887) at the Mansion House, the concern was to respond to the threat of protection in general and the recently signed French Treaty in particular:

...he was sure that there very large numbers of French traders who had no sympathy with the increased tariffs proposed to be levied, and who only wanted to be strengthened by the voice of the citizens of London in their opposition to those enhanced charges (Cheers). But there was no representative body to take the

²⁷ Ellis T. Powell, *Mechanisms of the City: An Analytical Survey of the Business of the City of London* (London, 1910).

²⁸ Edwin Green, *Debtors to Their Profession. A History of the Institute of Bankers 1879-1979* (London, 1979).

matter up, and each interest had, consequently, to fight for itself. The City of London was the foremost commercial centre in the world, and any opinion that it expressed, collectively or [in] trading matters would have vast weight. The proposed chamber of commerce was not hostile to the [other] trading organisations but it proposed to go further than they in being the representative body of the whole mercantile community do.²⁹

This then was an organisation that was conceived in a moment of anti-protectionist concern, born through the City's lack of unified ability to influence the French Treaty and one, therefore, that breathed the air of free trade. Total membership in 1882 was said to number 1,356, reaching a peak in 1890 that was not exceeded until 1910. How far it can claim to be the voice of the City, outside of the limits of the mercantilist interest, is questionable. Nevertheless, as we shall see, another part of Dr. Smith's argument - that the City through the activities of the Chamber, particularly in its promotion of Imperialism and its attendant nationalism, moved nearer to the state - is certainly correct.³⁰ Its claim to be a singular influence, however, omits to take into account the role of the City of London Corporation and its members as prime movers in this and many other spheres.³¹ In the case of the 'London Chamber of Commerce', the Corporation was well represented in its governing council. The Lord Mayor sat with the City's four members of Parliament, Alderman Cotton, Alderman Fowler, J.G. Hubbard, Alderman Lawrence as well as its Chairman, Samuel Morley MP, the Governor of the Bank of England, H R Grenfell, and Alderman Walker (1819-1882). This kind of role was one conceived for the Corporation by its Chamberlain, Benjamin Scott in 1867.

²⁹ *City Press*, 27 July 1881.

³⁰ Steven Reginald Burdett Smith, *British Nationalism, Imperialism and the City of London 1886-1900* (Unpublished Ph.D., University of London 1985).

³¹ Business meanwhile, including colonial business, was being pursued in the committees set up by the London Chamber of Commerce. Here as in other fields the paths of the Corporation and the Chamber often crossed. At a meeting called in July 1883, attended by an estimated 500 businessmen, the motion to improve communications by water between the Mediterranean and the Gulf of Suez was moved by Alderman Cotton MP, and another moved by Alderman Robert Fowler called for its international management. Likewise, in the following year, a public campaign meeting of the West India Committee to represent the sugar interest was initiated. The place where their destinies most collided, however, was the development of imperial attitudes to the Transvaal and South Africa. In an effort to influence government policy, missionaries and City businessmen came together to form a South Africa Committee.

Of course Scott was concerned about the legislative threat to the Corporation, as he saw it, from hostile governments and was in addition writing to a backdrop of the Paris Exhibition. His main concern was to make the City Corporation representative of its constituency, particularly in the year that the Corporation finally limited the Freedom to the ratepayer. As for the proposal to create a Corporation sponsored Chamber of Commerce: 'its effect will be to admit within the electoral body of the Corporation a very considerable number of commercial men now resident beyond that distance [seven miles] and hitherto excluded from the constituency either by the [now obsolete] state of law, or by their own indifference, or supineness'.³² The result, as we saw in Chapter Two, was 'a union of actions and interests' between traders and merchants in what was formally a divided constituency. With this reform in place by 1867, Scott looked forward 'to a purely commercial organisation' that would have at its head the Lord Mayor and would be partially staffed by the Corporation. Consequently, 'caring for the good government of the City and the welfare and prosperity of the commercial population', the interests of every class would be represented.³³ This was not the first or last time that a suggestion like this would be made. In August 1823 a meeting had been held at the City of London Tavern and to this end in February 1873 a meeting chaired by Common Councillor William Fowler at the London Tavern, Bishopsgate Street made similar noises.³⁴ The meeting, however, of 1881 proved to be the real thing.

The tension felt between the need to respond to the protectionist threat by a series of voluntarist actions, or to appeal direct to the state to combat foreign competition, was apparent in the earliest days of the 'London Chamber of Commerce', particularly in respect to the provision of commercial education.³⁵ Indeed, it was a set of assumptions about the nature of education that were first established in Joseph Levy's City of London College. In 1861, under the auspices of its Chairman, Robert Fowler, Metropolitan evening classes were constituted. On 2 October of that year, at a meeting held at the Mansion House called by Lord Mayor Cubitt (1791-1863), a more comprehensive educational process got under way. Just a few days later the first session

³² Benjamin Scott, *Suggestions for a Chamber of Commerce*, p. 7.

³³ Benjamin Scott, 'Suggestions for a Chamber of Commerce', p. 18.

³⁴ Charles E. Musgrave, *The London Chamber of Commerce from 1881 to 1914 - A Retrospective Appreciation* (London, 1914).

³⁵ The Commercial Education Committee of the London Chamber of Commerce was appointed at a conference on 14 December 1887; see Kenneth Lyons, *A Passport to Employment* (London, n.d.).

commenced with nine classes in French, six in German, four in Latin, two in Italian, two in Spanish and, notably three in book-keeping and two in shorthand. These, rather than the lessons in Writing, History, Arithmetic and Bible Studies that were also held suggest that 'a commercial element was creeping into the curriculum'.³⁶ Apparently, the college was serving some useful purpose and when a campaign was launched at the Mansion House to obtain a new site in White Street, it was supported by the Corporation and the Livery Companies. By 1891 the number of students was estimated to be 2,500. By this time too, the College had won a grant from the newly-formed Department of Science and Art, and was participating in technical subjects held by the City and Guilds of London Institute as well as holding examinations for those who wished to enter into the banking sector. This kind of slow gravitation towards 'practical' studies by just these kinds of voluntary bodies was not untypical. In fact, by the turn of the century education, both technical and commercial, was in the hands of a range of examining bodies such as the 'Society of Arts', the 'City Guilds', the 'London Chamber of Commerce' as well as professional institutes such as the 'Institute of Bankers' plus 'private adventure schools' like Pitman's and Quentin Hogg's polytechnics.³⁷

It is not surprising then, given the hotchpotch of mainly voluntarist bodies and the fixation with foreign competition, that when the Chamber asked its membership for a return of the clerks that they employed, the answers received should lead to a prompt appointment of a Special Committee in November 1887 to look into the subject. Along with the 'Association of Chambers of Commerce', it was believed that many of the clerks working in London's commercial businesses were foreign. The Committee led by the Lord Mayor and joined by, amongst others, Alderman Sir S.H. Waterlow (1822-1906) and Alderman Sir H A Isaacs (1830-1909) met through 1888 and 1889. They concluded that up to 40% of clerks employed in the relevant businesses were in fact, not only foreign, but also German. It was thought that this was because of the superior education of the foreign clerk, the obvious greater knowledge of continental languages and the willingness to work longer for less money, all of which led to hostility towards Germans in the City.³⁸ The immediate result was a scheme for junior and higher commercial education which commenced in 1890, examining just sixty-five candidates in that year and only eighty-one three years later. It was a weak

³⁶ L. A. Terry and Miss G. Harris, *The City of London College 1848-1948* (London, n.d.), p. 11.

³⁷ Cheesman A. Herrick, *Meaning and Practice of Commercial Education* (London, 1904).

³⁸ Charles E. Musgrave, *'The London Chamber of Commerce'*, p. 64.

response to a fundamental problem. Although it was reinforced by local efforts, 'as a means of meeting foreign competition both in the Mother Country and her colonies and possessions', it hardly faced the scale of the problem already accepted and detailed.³⁹ To a later generation the fact that the number of foreign clerks were said to have been reduced from 40% to 5% of the total was thought to be in spite of statist efforts and not because of them: 'It may be fairly claimed that Chambers of Commerce have done for the state what the state should have done as an obligation to the citizens of a commercial country'.⁴⁰

In the 1880s, the emphasis was placed on the natural 'character' of the English, rather than the manufactured 'science' of the foreign competitor, an opinion shared by the Chamber's Special Committee. In their classical liberal hearts they believed that, above all else, commerce had a moral and social purpose. As monopoly, like conquest, was antagonistic to commerce, so education 'coupled with industry and integrity, is rightfully considered the greatest money-maker, not by extortion, but by wise production and widespread distribution'.⁴¹ Commercial education was the 'basis of modern civilisation', and 'International trade is only an extension of the same principle. It is territorial division of labour, for the common good'. Critically, although some commentators were prepared to argue for a statist Minister of Education, it would be a ministry that presided over a system of voluntarist and localised institutions dedicated to the requirements of business perhaps, but also one schooled in the duties of the citizen.⁴² By the turn of the century the condition of domestic commercial education was attracting further comment: 'Two things about which the English public is becoming aroused are the commercial future of the Empire and the system of education; and it is coming to be felt that these are inseparably connected'.⁴³ Others went further and linked the same point to the worlds of culture and politics: 'English conservatism is in the bone and does not need to be artificially protected by intellectual backwardness, and by neglect of

³⁹ Philip Magnus, 'Schools of Commerce', *Contemporary Review* December (1887), pp.846-866.

⁴⁰ Charles E. Musgrave, *The London Chamber of Commerce*, p. 68.

⁴¹ John Yeats, *Commercial Instruction - The Golden Gates of Trade With Our Home Industries; introductory to a Study of Mercantile Economy and of the Science of Commerce* (London, 1890).

⁴² John Yeats, *On Commercial Training - A Paper Read October 6, 1873 in the Educational Department of the Social Science Congress, held at Norwich -reprinted from the Eastern Daily News, October 9* (London, 1873). Yeats suggests a number of localised model Trade or Guild schools to be funded by the Twelve Great Livery Companies of the City of London.

⁴³ Cheesman A. Herrick, *Commercial Education*, p. 175.

systematic organisation on modern lines'.⁴⁴ Again the juxtaposition continued to be made between the naturalness of the Englishman and the artificial organisation of his rival: 'German and American education are supplanting English character; or through education the Germans and the Americans have developed traits that are rapidly making their way against the native quality of the Englishman'.⁴⁵ It would seem, foreigners could only 'develop' character, apply science and education and resort to the overweening state. All that was left for Britain was a 'conservatism in the bone' and, of course, real liberalism:

Life is a much wider and more complicated thing than livelihood. But livelihood is necessary to support life, and commerce happens to be necessary to support the life of the British Empire. Never before was it so necessary as it is now for us to look ahead and lay far reaching plans for the maintenance and development of British commerce. Our rivals have come up hand over hand . They have applied scientific precision to the organisation of business life. Some of them have used, with consummate skill and forethought, the collective power of the state in the furtherance of commercial interests. Under modern conditions of national life, the proof and outcome of a really scientific state of mind in a nation is the degree of intelligent interest that the nation takes in its schools. What we need in England is a great wave of wise educational enthusiasm.⁴⁶

Perhaps not unsurprisingly in an Individualist, liberal framework it appeared that business was somebody else's concern. As for the appeal for a 'wave of enthusiasm', the Lord Mayor and the Court of Common Council were amongst those who were thanked for their 'assistance and hospitality' at the meeting of the 'International Society for the Promotion of Commercial Education' held at the London School of Economics in 1912.⁴⁷ Their contribution, we should note, had been voluntary.

⁴⁴ M. E. Sadler, *The King's Weigh House Lectures to Business Men* (London, 1901), p. 40.

⁴⁵ Chesman A. Herrick, '*Commercial Education*', p. 132.

⁴⁶ M. E. Sadler, '*The King's Weigh House*', p. 23.

⁴⁷ W. Pember Reeves, *Lectures on British Commerce including finance, insurance, business and industry* (London, 1912).

To summarise the chapter so far, we might confidently argue the following. According to 'Real Liberals' of the old school found in both political parties and in all parts of the Corporation, the state, like the economy that maintained it, was a 'natural growth' and the job of science was to alert humanity to the development of society.⁴⁸ Neither society nor the state could be likened to a machine: artificially manufactured, liable to breakdown and open to repair.⁴⁹ Yet, the threat of foreign competition, not adverse to protecting its markets or to using the state in order to educate its workforce, was looming larger and had become a subject of common concern.⁵⁰ Within this framework, it may have been no accident then that the 'Chambers of Commerce' and the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' were founded within a year of each other in 1881 and 1882 respectively. They shared many ideas and many more members. The latter was established as a response to the political threat posed from an encroaching state, the former from a need to preserve the economy from the heresy of protection. Both had the word defence written on their souls, if not in their constitution, and both would seek to preserve the benefits of the liberal ideal at home, if not abroad. The inconsistency in this essentialist liberal position, however, was exposed in their reaction to this perceived crisis and - like the promotion of technical education - their willingness to bend the ideological rules.

That they were prepared to engage the state in the promotion of imperialism, took a bizarre second place in their considerations. Therefore, 'A broad distinction could be drawn between the City, which wished to see the state active abroad but unchanged at home, and socialism and protectionism which pressed for the state to be more active at home. The City was in the difficult position of arguing against state interference and in favour of laissez-faire at home, but in favour of

⁴⁸ M. Leon Say, *Municipal and State Socialism. Fourth Annual Meeting, Westminster Palace Hotel, June 30, 1886* (London, 1886).

⁴⁹ Consequently most Individualists turned their face against education for the general population. See, for example, Earl Fortescue, *Rate-And-Tax-Aides Education. Why I Joined the Liberty and Property Defence League* (London, 1883).

⁵⁰ Walter Graham Blackie, *Commercial Education. An Address* (London, 1888); Frederick W. Edwards, *Industrial Education* (Liverpool, 1888).

state aid abroad' ⁵¹ This promotion of the state in the bolstering of imperial interests, as Herbert Spencer argued, was of a piece with the trend towards collectivism. The preference for state rather than voluntary methods was another step back to Spencean definitions of barbarism. ⁵² Hence, from the 1880s, the City's link with imperialism, militarism and nationalism and its use of state action to secure markets, was simply the reverse side of the same collectivist coin: a social imperialism that at once bound classes together, and blunted that other product of the 1880s, the Socialist revival. ⁵³ Thus a set of circumstances emerged, led by the threat of protection from mainly European rivals, that in turn produced the conclusion right across the City that a policy of imperialism must lead to a re-thinking of outdated ideas and concepts regarding business and its relation to the state. It was not, however, an old Liberalism replaced by the New Liberalism of say T. H. Green, but by Conservatism, as we shall see, of a profoundly non-or anti-democratic type.

As if on cue, the 'Imperial Federation League' was founded in the mid 1880s. Like the 'Liberty and Property Defence League', this body became part of the Conservative interest, articulating a language that was not only defensive of property but was also, for the most part, constitutionally backward. Its case rested on the pillar of narrow imperial preference, and not overt universal protectionism. ⁵⁴ Always enthusiastic for the imperial cause, those in the City already connected with the 'Liberty and Property Defence League', but now part of the Individualist alignment, had previously been the most vocal in the reaction to Germany's protectionist stance of 1879 and were amongst the quickest to align the future of commerce with the survival of Empire. ⁵⁵ Some commentators have argued that the movement towards Imperial Federation had a longer gestation period than one that dates from a single reaction to European protectionism. Indeed it has been suggested that it was the dissatisfaction with Gladstone's 1869-70 colonial policy which

⁵¹ Smith, *'British Nationalism'*, p. 62.

⁵² Bernard Semmel, *'The Liberal Ideal'*, p. 110.

⁵³ Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform. English Social and Imperial Thought 1895-1914* (London, 1960), p. 24.

⁵⁴ Yet another product of the early 1880s was the National Fair Trade League. With a membership that contained more than a sprinkling of manufacturing interests and a positive downpour of farmers, it was conspicuously parched of City figures. Located firmly within the Conservative Party, it was raised for a brief moment as an antidote to an ascendant urban Liberalism. See P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism-Innovation and Expansion 1688-1914* (London, 1993), p. 212.

⁵⁵ Cain and Hopkins, *'British Imperialism- Innovation'*, p. 208, n. 22.

sparked what was essentially a latent *zeitgeist*.⁵⁶ More likely that Conservative figures in the City, who had always championed the cause of imperialism, had developed an anti-Gladstonian aspect long before the so-called 'old' or 'real' Liberals became alarmed by the global challenge to the principle of free trade. In fact, Alderman Robert Fowler, leader of the Conservative Party in the City, had attended a meeting on the colonial question as early as July 1871 along with the Liberal, Alderman William McArthur.⁵⁷ This said, it seemed to be Liberals who were shifting most ground at this time, seeking to make the issue of imperial federation a subject of mainstream politics.

As a brainchild of the United Empire Movement within the Royal Colonial Institute, the Imperial Federation League and its adherents, men like McArthur, were businessmen associated with the Australia trades and had been previously attached to the 'Association for the Australian Colonies'.⁵⁸ The first annual meeting of the League was held in the Mansion House and was hosted by the Lord Mayor, Alderman Stables (1815-1888). Already the City Corporation's contribution to the General and Executive Committee included the Right Hon. G. Cubitt, Baron Dimsdale, Fowler, McArthur, and, by 1891, Alderman Evans (1849-1907). The City branch of the League, however, was not inaugurated until later in the year although it had been constituted on 26 February 1889 at the Guildhall Tavern. With Fowler presiding, it only attracted a small attendance despite the fact that 'a large number of bankers and merchants had announced their intention of joining the branch'.⁵⁹ The meeting of 15 November, which launched the branch was held at the Egyptian Hall of the Mansion House. Sir Henry Isaacs as Lord Mayor, and owner of a major shipping company, was joined by Aldermen Fowler and Lusk as well as Sir John Simon, Cardinal Manning, Kenric Murray (Secretary of the London Chamber of Commerce), C. Freeman Murray (Secretary of the City branch of the League) plus assorted members from the nobility and colonies.

⁵⁶ M. D. Burgess, *The Imperial Federation Movement in Great Britain* (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Leicester, 1976), p. 14.

⁵⁷ R. A. McMillan Shields, *The Quest for Empire Unity* (Unpublished Ph.D., University of Pennsylvania, 1961). According to Shields, Fowler was 'active', but not 'prominent', p. 54. McArthur defected to the Liberal Unionists in 1886.

⁵⁸ McArthur was one of those, unlike Fowler, who used the various imperialist bodies not in the pursuit of an ideology, but as a business opportunity. See G.L. (Mans) Ms. 16, 511 *Australasian Trade Preliminary Meeting, 12 May 1885*.

⁵⁹ *Imperial Federation*, April 1 1889.

Among those who offered their apologies was Sir John Lubbock, President of the City branch.⁶⁰ Once more the City was presented as the centre for finance capital and the guardian of popular liberties. As Manning put it: 'I cannot forget that next to the legislature of England there is no institution and certainly no municipality, that has ever done, for the making and unity of England, what the City of London has done, and what the City of London has done for England it is bound to continue to do for Empire'. As the great 'nerve centre' of the Empire, he went on, from here all the 'instinctive senses of the whole Empire' radiate. To continue the biological metaphor, it was thought that 'commerce without Empire is like wings without a body'. Manning spoke of the centre from the centre, but from the colonial boundaries praise turned into eulogy:

it seems perfectly natural and perfectly appropriate that I should bring some of the results of my observations to this great centre - this great City which is essentially the Centre of our National Life; and I may say also to this Mansion House, which has for so many hundreds of years embodied the great traditions of this City's history. I never come to the City of London after being away for a time without feeling that this is the place where the heart of the world is beating; that here is its concentrated energy and population and wealth is the spot where the great movements of commerce, of finance, of politics, of thought, of literature - of everything almost - are initiated, or from which they have their direction.⁶¹

Clearly the City Corporation and its members had the power to initiate and direct this and many other movements associated with the imperialist moment at the end of the nineteenth century.⁶² However, the late formation of a City branch of the Imperial Federation League does demand explanation. Officially it was argued that the City branch headquarters at 66 Basinghall Street was so close to the national offices of the League that it was hardly worth forming a separate and distinct branch. More likely is a reservation amongst City figures about the constitutional implications of some of the League's demands. The League nationally enjoyed a diverse

⁶⁰ Lubbock was also President of the Banker's Association. After the collapse of the City Branch of the Imperial Federation League, he set up the British Empire League in January 1896.

⁶¹ *City Press*, 16 November 1889; The speaker was Mr. R. Parkin from New Brunswick.

⁶² *Imperial Federation*, 1 December 1889. The City meeting certainly caught the attention of the public newspapers that covered the story included *the Morning Post*, *Daily News*, *Standard*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Morning Advertiser*, *Globe*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *St. James's Gazette*, *Evening News*, *Observer*, *Sunday Times*, *Manchester Examiner*, *Leeds Mercury*, *Bradford Observer*, *Western Morning News*, *New York Herald*, *Glasgow Herald*, *Leicester Post*, and *South Eastern Gazette*.

membership whose demands, at different times, ranged variously from defence of the Empire and Imperial protection to seeking Home Rule for Ireland and the abolition of the imperial prerogatives of the Houses of Commons and Lords.⁶³ This package failed to appeal to any part of the City's constituency, and along with the need of the City to conduct worldwide as well as imperial business, the League collapsed under the weight of its internal contradictions by 1893.

Alongside this need to trade with the entire world, and this was certainly a critical factor, the City by the 'year of decision', 1886, had a policy to promote business in the colonies and to preserve a united Empire in order to make that goal possible. Gladstone had threatened this with his careless colonial policy in 1869-70, and his attitude towards Home Rule for Ireland. Indeed his promise to introduce a Home Rule Bill prompted a meeting in the Guildhall of City bankers and merchants. This was a meeting also peopled by members of the City Corporation and the Livery Companies and might be seen, therefore, within the context of a more rarefied civic history. Compare in this context, the Great Reform meetings in the City that Revd. Solly recalled his father speaking to in the early 1830s, or the throng of the Reform meeting in 1867, chronicled in Chapter Two. These were assemblies of a different type and composition, confirming the engagement between the financial and civic City, introduced via the City Corporation's constitutional changes after 1867, and which, in turn, led to a large measure of City support for Liberal Unionism in 1886.

So much of the apparatus and language of the City's past survived and then informed imperialist activity after this date. Meeting at the Mansion House in November 1883, a South Africa Committee made up of missionaries and City businessmen, were said to have intervened in government policy-making as Gladstone's government was negotiating with the Boers. On this occasion at a crowded meeting, objection to the Bechanaland frontier in favour of the Transvaal was presented not as an issue of concern for commerce, but as one involving the 'great principle of civil and religious liberty'.⁶⁴ It was crucial that business and politics should appear to be kept apart, and so in this instance the City Corporation became the defenders of democracy and not the promoters of a commercial interest.⁶⁵ The parallel approach of calling upon public opinion in order

⁶³ Shields, *The Quest for Empire Unity*, p. 372.

⁶⁴ *City Press*, 28 November 1883; these were the words of Lord Pembroke, member of the Liberty and Property Defence League.

⁶⁵ Smith, *British Nationalism*, pp. 106,107.

to gain a commercial advantage for the City and then defending it in the name of liberty, or an older civic virtue, took a more spectacular turn by the 1890s.⁶⁶ Events such as the Home Rule agitation and nationalistic meetings that came after it, were orchestrated by the City Conservative Association. Congratulations were extended to the organisers, 'upon the marvellous success achieved, and on the cleverness with which the spirit of the moment was seized.'⁶⁷ Generally considered to be held under the auspices of the Lord Mayor and the Corporation - outside of the party political arena - they were wrapped and thereby hidden, within the nationalistic folds of the Union Jack.

(iv)

What then of the shattered remains of the liberal ideal? Somewhere after the signing of the free trade-based Declaration of Paris in 1856, 'Real Liberalism' in the City had dissolved into Conservatism. No longer was it believable that, 'the growth of an international economy would bring about an era of universal peace. Commerce would supplant war, and a world of hostile states would give way to a cosmopolitan republic of mankind'.⁶⁸ Later meetings of the 'Navy League', held in

⁶⁶ In a meeting requested by Lubbock, in his capacity as President of the Bankers Association, and called by the Lord Mayor, notices for a gathering were placed on the walls of the Mansion House, Guildhall and Stock Exchange. Invitations were sent to 2,000 members of the Stock Exchange to attend the meeting to be held at Guildhall. The procession would, the *City Press* reported in gleeful anticipation, set off at 2 o'clock and 'Four large flags-two Royal Standards and two Union Jacks - will be borne in front, while individual members will be at liberty to provide themselves with national emblems, a privilege which will, no doubt, be taken full of advantage of'; *City Press*, Saturday, 14 October 1899. After the event it was reported with equal glee that 'the enthusiasm manifested was extraordinary'. Interests from Mincing Lane, Mark Lane, the Baltic Exchange and Lloyd's were joined by those on the platform inside the packed hall, namely by Mr J. K. Hitchens (Chairman of the Stock Exchange) and G. F. Miller (Deputy Chairman of Lloyds). Alderman Hanson moved that the government should be aware of the, 'cordial and enthusiastic support of the citizens of London in claiming and insisting on equal rights for all the white races throughout South Africa'; *City Press*, Wednesday, 18 October 1899.

⁶⁷ (City of Westminster Library) Acc. 487/28 *City of London Conservative Association. Minutes of Annual General Meeting*; Conservative Common Councillor Pearce Morrison was active behind the scenes organising many of these imperialist meetings. His efforts were joined by those of Common Councilman W. H. Russell during the Home Rule meeting in the City. This was not the first occasion in which a barely constitutional meeting was organised by City Conservatives to protest against Liberal foreign policy. It also happened under the banner of the City Neutrality Committee in January, 1878. See Smith, 'British Nationalism', p. 166. For an account of some of these meetings, see also Hugh Cunningham, 'Jingoism in 1877-78', *Victorian Studies*, June (1971), p. 450. On this occasion the patriotism of the 'tipsy Alderman' is explained by an inferiority complex in mixing with the toffs.

⁶⁸ Bernard Semmel, *Liberalism and Naval Strategy. Ideology, Interest, and Sea Power during the Pax Britannica* (London, 1986), p. 4.

the City of London and attended by figures such as Alderman Hanson, confirmed this trend.⁶⁹ The Corporation, like the rest of the City, had seen the rise of a view that, instead of arguing for a civilising commercial peace even in the midst of national war, sought instead a continuous national dividend needed both to feed profits and satisfy the demands of a newly enfranchised populace.

This inevitably meant a relationship with the state, at least in imperial matters, that hitherto - or at least since mid-century - had been unthinkable. It also required a new relationship with public opinion.⁷⁰ Recent historiography has emphasised the role of City businessmen in the construction of a public mood for military expansion, one that led directly to the trenches of the Great War:

In general terms, the City's role in the expansion of the navy in the 1880s and onwards can be seen as a significant part of the European arms race of the period. The fact that it was so committed to the policy underscores the importance of it to the City with its policy of free trade - that is to say the policy whereby government was expected to protect and encourage the profit-making activity of City merchants and bankers, but was kept as far away as possible from the control of that activity. The success of naval expansion as an issue, in the face of very limited support in Britain, serves to demonstrate the power and influence of the City, as well as its agility, at a time when changes in international economic circumstances coincided with an extension of the franchise at home.⁷¹

By the 1890s former Gladstonian Liberals within the City Corporation as well as its Individualists had adopted not just the politics of Empire, but its economics too. With the expansion of the British Empire came a larger navy and a larger state to service both. Therefore if 1886 was the 'year of decision' in the City, so too was it the year of the imperialist. The 'Imperial Federation League' had held a conference on the subject of defence and both the *Statist* and the *Pall Mall Gazette* published articles drawn from a secretive Royal Commission on the defence of British possessions

⁶⁹ *Navy League Journal*, May 1896; Like the Corporation, the Navy League insisted that it was, 'A strictly non-party organisation to urge upon Government and the Electorate the paramount importance of an adequate Navy as the best guarantee of Peace'. The City branch of the Navy League was founded by Fowler in Guildhall Tavern in November 1889.

⁷⁰ See, Arthur J. Marder, *British Naval Policy 1880-1905: The Anatomy of British Sea Power* (Norwood, 1940).

⁷¹ Steven R. B. Smith, 'Public Opinion, the Navy and the City of London: The Drive for British Naval Expansion in the Late Nineteenth Century' *War and Society*, 9, 1 (May 1991), p. 42; I am grateful to Martin Daunton for providing me with this source.

and commerce abroad.⁷² As a Conservative Party strategy it was halted in Cabinet by Gladstone's reduction of the naval estimates. Nevertheless meetings were held, often chaired by Fowler, that were notable for the presence of Conservatives and more notable for Liberal absentees. This was in no way unusual. In fact by the mid-1880s it became commonplace for the Mansion House to play host to members of the naval movement, underlying as they did, the City's alliance with the military.⁷³ At the centre of both commerce and Nation, was the City, and enveloping all three was the military-fiscal state

By this time, the City of London Corporation had at last fulfilled the wishes of its former Chamberlain, Benjamin Scott. It was representative of a City that was itself representative of commercial and financial interests. Supporting commercial and imperialist propaganda campaigns, and aligning itself firmly with political Conservatism, the City of London Corporation continued to claim independence from both commercialism and politics. But its claims were implausible. As part of the Conservative interest, it was supping with the statist devil. In many ways those active in the 'Liberty and Property Defence League' or those concerned with the 'Bankers Institute' or the 'London Chambers of Commerce', or even some of the imperialist groupings such as the 'Imperial Federation League', were a minority within the Corporation but acted, nevertheless, as lodestars for a City yet to be. Even if they were comparatively few, an ideology was branded onto the body-politic of the City. While the liberal ideal was initially observed religiously in domestic matters, it was ignored for the purposes of securing markets abroad. In all of these areas the actions of the 'dignified' part of the City as important actors cannot be underestimated, and when added together, equal a sizeable political contribution. The fact that the Corporation was anxious to keep the affairs of business and the deliberations of politics apart was itself a deeply political act. To revive the biological metaphor, that they did not succeed was because that to do so would have been like separating body and soul, financial City and civic City. Thus by the time Gladstone had resigned

⁷² Smith, 'Public Opinion', pp.30,31; See also D. M. Schurman, *Imperial Defence, 1868-1887* (Unpublished Ph.D, University of Cambridge, 1955).

⁷³ The high point of the naval agitation, however, came with a meeting in 1893 between City figures and important representatives of the armed services. On this occasion the Lord Mayor was too ill to attend. However, meeting under the auspices of the London Chambers of Commerce those present included Alderman Sir Reginald Hanson, Kenric B. Murray with Sir Albert Rollit presiding. Described as a 'great defence demonstration: [it] showed the union of the nation and the navy, and the determination to have for this country not only security, but also confidence, which was the very basis of our commerce'; *City Press*, Wednesday, 13 December 1893.

over naval estimates in 1894, the City and its Corporation would have forsaken the grail of free trade for the nirvana of the gold standard. Its approach to liberty, therefore, was qualified and partial. As Toulmin feared the City had now given way to selfishness and licence, where once the ideal of mutuality, shared responsibilities and rights and duties had held sway. The only thought given to mass democracy was how it might be caged or how it might be tamed. It was only in this very particular sense that Tory democracy, within the City walls at least, was not a contradiction in terms. The voluntarist caterpillar of civil society had, in reality, turned into a statist butterfly. As we will discover in the final chapter, only the attractive appearance of the Lord Mayor's Show remained intact.

Chapter Six

Representing the City: The Lord Mayor's Show

The Lord Mayor is coming;
And here are the Aldermen
There's very few balder men;
And here march the Livery,
Looking quite shivery.
In and out straggling,
Thro the mud struggling;
I am sure the poor sinners
Must want their dinners.
Well, now the fun's over
They'll fatten in clover,
And afterward drink in it.
So, what do you think of it?

The Lord Mayor's Show by Thomas Hood

As 'Real Liberals' turned into Conservatives, they related to each other the circumstances of their transformation. The form this took was to posit a representation of the City that focused on it as a place of wealth and moneymaking, but one that was tempered by values derived from a moral community. Often these views were relayed in books or articles, celebrations such as ward and guild histories, or else in guidebooks that recalled triumphs past. This story telling was depicted in pictures as well as words. Nonetheless, it might still be thought of as a politics rooted in social reality, particularly as the way that the City was represented was contested, played out in order to establish a dominant identity for the City. An older representation of the City, of mutual rights and duties, had been presented by Toulmin and others at the moment of the Chartist march in 1848. The City of 1886, however, embraced a more limited definition of citizenship and preferred to appeal to the property owner as well as the constitutional conservative. This divided liberalism argued on the one hand, in the case of Toulmin, for the politics of community activity, an ideal that was in essence anti-materialist. On the other hand, the Ratepayer's Associations, the institutions of the City's associational life - Livery Companies and City Clubs - and those that joined the nationally based libertarian movements, were acquisitive by instinct. Thus these varying representations of the City, presented during the Lord Mayor's show became, as one historian has put it, 'the

contested terrain of street politics'. This indeed was a 'theatre of politics', where ideology, culture and power intersected, where images of the City vied for popular esteem and, where too, the boundaries of the real and the imagined blurred.¹ The result was the creation of a dynamic political space, where the crowd lining the streets entered into an uneven battle over how the City should be represented, to both them and the nation at large.

At the heart of this political process were ideas of how the past might be represented. In many ways this was a cyclical historicism, featuring themes that were anything but new. For example, like their late nineteenth century counterparts, medieval and early modern accounts of the visual aspects of Lord Mayor's Day revealed a much closer and more obvious connection between the English State and its capital. Pageant theatre, it has been argued, 'was one of the principal bridges over which medieval drama crossed unimpeded into the Renaissance'.² The idea of the Lord Mayor's Show as drama was highlighted by the decline in 'Courtly' pageants and Royal entries. Occasions such as Coronations took on less significance, while the Show as civic entertainment grew in popularity.³ Dramatists such as Peele, Middleton, Dekker and Heywood lent their talents to the Show, and its use of allegory and 'stage direction' gives a further impression of the pageant as a dramatic form.⁴ However, whereas then the Lord Mayor's Show was seen as entertainment now, in the nineteenth century, it sought to educate or propagandise.

(i)

Before the 1850s the parade still travelled by water from London Bridge to Westminster. (It had been cancelled in 1817 on the occasion of the death of Princess Charlotte and in 1834 on the 'apprehension of political tumult'.) Although differing in detail from year to year, the procession in 1842 was not untypical. Led by the boys of the Marine Society, next in line was the Goldsmiths' Company, the Company of Tallow Melters' (of whom the proposed Lord Mayor was a member),

¹ Nicholas Rogers, *Popular Politics in the Age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford, 1989), pp. 9, 351, 363.

² David M. Bergeron, *English Civic Pageantry 1558-1642* (London, 1971), p. 8; See also, Roy Strong, *Art and Power - Renaissance Festivals 1450-1650* (Suffolk, 1984).

³ David Bergeron, 'English Civic Pageantry', esp. 'The Lord Mayor's Shows', pp. 123-243.

⁴ David Bergeron, 'English Civic Pageantry', p. 134.

various City Officers and Sheriffs, the last Lord Mayor, the Court of Aldermen, the Lord Mayor-elect attended by Chaplain, Sword Bearer and Water Bailiff, the band of the Life Guards and a detachment of the Royal Horse Guards. In this year, as in others, the Lord Mayor preferred to travel through his own constituency or ward, commuting on this occasion from Cornhill via Gracechurch Street to the Southwark side of the river, 'closely adjoining the range of warehouses belonging to his Lordship'.⁵ From here, the Lord Mayor's entourage used the 'powerful sweeps' of the Watermen of the Thames', following its 'silent highway' towards Westminster and the main seat of law and government. After the 'customary ceremonies', involving the Barons of the Exchequer, his Lordship along with the previous Lord Mayor and the Sheriffs, proceeded to several courts of law and equity where the City Recorder, in the Lord Mayor's name, invited the Queen's Judges to the Banquet at Guildhall.

In the streets outside the Guildhall, preceding the Banquet, the crowd would often make their feelings to the Lord Mayor regarding the success or otherwise of the incumbent. In 1844 Lord Mayor Gibbs (-1858) refused to show his accounts during his year as Mayor. He was particularly unpopular as he had abstained from joining the Queen and the civic procession to open the Royal Exchange a few days earlier: unpopular to the extent that *The Times* carried an advertisement offering a large supply of rotten eggs to be used on the day. During the 'Glorious Ninth' itself, some sections of the crowd suspended a flag from a building in the lower end of Cannon Street with the words, 'Honour and Virtue Will Finally Triumph'. Throughout the procession 'Mr Gibbs had to endure a perpetual and pitiless storm of hisses, yells, groans, gibes, sneers, and jeers: and at every stoppage where the crowd was in close proximity to his carriage, unusually furious bursts of indignation broke forth'.⁶ When Gibbs reached the end of his Mayoralty he was asked to account to the Exchequer for his official expenses. This part of the oath was greeted by a 'general titter throughout the Court', still at this time colonised by the general public. Furthermore, when the usher formally called Gibbs forward to render his account, the titters turned into bursts of laughter. This in many ways was Toulmin's City of London. It placed importance on neighbourhood and political accountability; it commanded public interest (even from the disenfranchised), and it kept a good civic arms-length from the state and the machinations of central government. Equally the Lord

⁵ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 12 November 1842.

⁶ *The Times*, Monday, 14 November 1844.

Mayor still, to some extent, represented popular opinion as a person, not simply the holder of an office. He remained the 'embodiment of citizenship', the personification of which 'never dies as its spirit is immortal'. As Gibbs found to his cost, the popularity of a Lord Mayor could alter like the quality of his Show from year to year. This was not just the blind celebration of a position, but an adjudication upon the qualities of an individual. In this representation of the City, its King was reminiscent of a time when the monarchy was supposed to have been popularly 'elective', with the Aldermen sitting in the Upper House and the Common Council standing in the Parliament below. The Liverymen were the franchise, their Companies were the constituencies, while the functionaries of the Corporation, such as the Recorder and Common Sergeant, represented 'a miniature of the Judges of the land'. The common people not only cheered loyally from the sidelines, but also consented to lend their sovereignty to those that governed with their connivance. Even with the erosion of local self-government and a more general disenchantment with representative democracy, the proceedings in the 1840s were seen as 'a shadow - and a magnificent shadow - of when the entire commonalty met and acted together'.⁷

Yet the politics of the 1840s in the City had, in many ways, been set more than a hundred years since. Whereas the Whigs, like the Aldermen, were associated with high finance and often were more influential in the Livery Companies than the wards, the country opposition were more popular in the City's boundaries and, like the Common Council, were thought to be connected with domestic trade and manufacturing. The City Election Act of 1725 compounded this division, and introduced a number of measures that consolidated power with the largest Companies, disenfranchised some Freemen in the wards, allocated votes to some categories of business partners, signalled a more complex qualifying process, strengthened the power of the Court of Aldermen, and made the supervision of polls less transparent and rigorous. Although the 'people' to the Whigs were 'legitimately sovereign in every community' and the constitution, rescued from Royal despotism was based on natural rights, they were rights not to be exercised directly by the people but by the Whig aristocracy. It was because of their wealth and leisure that they could act in a neutral manner on behalf of the populace. Thus Parliament became the supreme power and the Whigs, because of skills forged out of a classical education and religious secularism, were most qualified to act in its chambers. To Toulmin, as importance was placed on political participation

⁷ *Illustrated London News*, Thursday, 7 November 1844.

(indeed it was intended to be worn as a badge of citizenship) and notions of laissez-faire and political economy were secondary in importance, the 1725 legislation marked a retreat from popular representation and an advance towards patronage and sectional politics. According to one historian, by the 1830s and 1840s the antics of the 'Grand Whiggery' ('a cluster of heavily intermarried grandee families') had become objectionable to middle class critics.⁸ Objections did not surface, as they had done with Toulmin regarding the 'constraint of representation' and the 'reassertion of patrician authority', but from 'a fear of open politics untempered by the sinews of patronage and magnate power'.⁹

Therefore, although the Show in 1848 took place on a day described variously as fine, genial and brilliant, its political context thereafter was one of tension between these two visions of the City's identity.¹⁰ To the latter persuasion - the 'Real Liberals' - the Lord Mayor's Show was raised as an organic and harmonic scene, allegedly unrivalled in the civilised world and brought to the highest point of constitutional perfection. As one contemporary put it: 'The Parisians in their revolution erect barriers in the streets - the Police do the same in London on Lord Mayor's Day'.¹¹ The first was used in order to attack liberty, and the second erected for the purposes of celebrating it. The Lord Chief Baron, addressing the Lord Mayor, echoed these sentiments by arguing that 'the ceremony which takes place on this occasion is not to be considered as a mere idle pageant'. It was, alternatively, the way in which the City reached out to the state, not simply to claim back its ancient rights and privileges renewed on an annual basis, but to celebrate the finest 'model of the free institutions that prevail throughout the Empire'.¹² In this spirit, a format for a new style procession was suggested by George Godwin, editor of the *Builder*, to Alderman Musgrave (1793-1881) in October 1850. His wish was that 'some art and knowledge equal to the liberality of the City should be displayed in the invention of their pageants'.¹³ The theme of the Show was one of

⁸ Peter Mandler, *Aristocratic Government in the Age of Reform - Whigs and Liberals 1830-1852* (Oxford, 1990), p. 45, n.2.

⁹ Nicholas Rogers, *'Whigs and Cities'*, pp. 35-45.

¹⁰ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 11 November 1848.

¹¹ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 15 November 1845.

¹² *The Times*, Saturday, 10 November 1849.

¹³ George Godwin, *Suggestions for the Improvement of the Lord Mayor's Show, in a letter to the Lord Mayor Elect J. Musgrave* (1850).

peace and international co-operation of a Cobdenite variety. Parading on the streets of London were the horse of Europe, the camel of Asia, the elephant of Africa and the two deers of America. Similar representations were made for the 'Attributes of Industry', the 'Attributes of Art', the 'Attributes of Commerce' and the 'Attributes of Manufactures', 'Britannia' and 'Happiness'. The City had led public opinion in this 1850 example by an 'anticipatory illustration of the glorious Great Exhibition', as well as making an obtuse reference to free trade. The City's emerging politics lay in its ability and willingness to provide a voice for the middle classes, acting as a bulwark to the aristocratic system:

as long as order, liberty, independence, and public spirit are valued, the Lord Mayor will be ex-officio, an embodiment of the highest prerogatives of citizenship. The history of the City of London furnishes many glorious examples of the power of personal worth, intelligence, and patriotism; and the Mayoralty is a perpetual protest against exclusive privilege by hereditary descent, against the disposition of the destinies of a nation by the order of accident, instead of the order of the best mind and best morality the nation can produce. ¹⁴

The editorial columns of the *City Press* insisted that critics failed to understand that the Lord Mayor was the 'concentrated essence of all municipal institutions'. Furthermore, these antagonists:

...have not the wit to perceive the full meaning of this celebration, as they have also no knowledge of the facts that give the meaning force. It is not known, as it should be, that in the Lord Mayor of London we have a visible link between the people and the Crown, wholly Independent of hereditary title, Cabinet influence, or Court favour..in the defence of popular liberties, and the expression, in the ear of the highest personage of the state, of the will and desire of the people. The celebration of the ninth of November is made lustrous by its immediate association with the vital elements of free government, free speech and decentralisation; and the general public may well take part in a proceeding which, in its spirit, is itself a celebration of liberties dearly won, and highly prized. ¹⁵

¹⁴ *The Times*, Saturday, 4 November 1865.

¹⁵ *City Press*, Saturday, 9 November 1861.

The post of Lord Mayor was passing from being the election of the First Citizen of a populous City to become the solemnisation of an Office, the incumbent of which was representative of much more than just a superannuated local authority. Put simply, the position of Lord Mayor of London was becoming more important than the person who filled it. A City watchmaker in 1868, giving evidence to the Select Committee on Metropolitan Local Government, reasoned that the Lord Mayor 'has a particularly political authority which I consider to be very beneficial for middle class people; I think that if you abolish the Lord Mayor, you very much abolish the authority of the trading classes as opposed to what may be called the aristocratic classes. The City of London does give an authority and a position to men in trading communities, which otherwise they would lose.. the chasm would be very large between the aristocracy and the trading classes if such a body did not continue to exist'.¹⁶ He stood for order, liberty, independence, and public service 'ex officio, an embodiment of the highest prerogatives of citizenship'. However, for 'Real Liberals' citizenship was no longer all embracing, a coalition of classes and types. Instead, the Lord Mayor was evoked as a spur to 'respectable society', and a focus of emulation to the growing professional classes, rather than a mirror held up to the entire populace.¹⁷ The idea of the Lord Mayor as a byword for success (with Dick Whittington in the procession utilised as the epitome of the self-made man) is a familiar topic throughout the period. It was recalled how after the Show was over 'two thousand City apprentices - not one less - who had a holiday that day (to take warning that they might come to ?) were soon seen seated before as many kitchen fires, drying their feet and indulging in as much golden day-dreams of being all in their turns Lord Mayor's hereafter'.¹⁸ A contemporary ditty on the subject went like this:

And still you ask *cui bone* Think, we pray,
 Among the multitudes that line the way
 How prentice lads may mark some millionaire
 Riding, perhaps in gilded chariot, there;
 One who, to his high honour be it said,

¹⁶ Quoted in David Owen, *The Government of Victorian London 1855-1889* (London, 1982), pp. 233-234.

¹⁷ F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society - A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900* (London, 1988).

¹⁸ Cornelius Webbe, *Glances at Life in City and Suburb* (London, 1845).

Swept out the shop in which his wealth was made!-
Think what a spur to laudable ambition. ¹⁹

The relationship of these apprentices to the small producer has often been contested around questions of a 'largely mythical social mobility', or 'the fantasy of an open society'. ²⁰ Certainly - or so it appeared - no such contest existed as far as City opinion was concerned. Instead, Cobbett, articulating Hogarth's observations of the industrious apprentice, was said to have noted that 'many a young man has been more industrious and attentive from his hope of one day riding in the golden coach'. ²¹ What was true of the early part of the period remained constant to the end, save in one important respect. The Lord Mayor in the 1884 was Robert Fowler. Preferred unexpectedly, Fowler proved to be a controversial choice. He was described as perhaps 'the best hissed Chief Magistrate of the City of London that has yet made his appearance on the streets on the 9th of November'. ²² However, as extracts from his diary reveal, the disrespect shown was very much limited to one section of the route, (Fleet Street) and identified, by him at least, as supporters of his political enemy, Bradlaugh. ²³ In any case, this was not a comment on Fowler as a person. 'If they greeted his Lordship in this way from a conscientious opinion that an injustice had been done to the Senior Alderman upon the rota, then it shows that a keener interest is taken by the lower classes in City politics than one would at first consider likely'. ²⁴ It seemed, rather, that where once the Lord Mayor's attributes and achievements were known only locally, now national considerations had taken hold. When Fowler returned in the show of 1884 as outgoing Lord Mayor (only to return for a second term a few months later on the death in office of Lord Mayor Nottage) he was shown support from the crowd as 'a worthy representative of what is best in the commercial classes of London'. ²⁵

¹⁹ *Prologue and Epilogue to the Lord Mayor's Show 1867* (1867).

²⁰ Clive Behagg, *Politics and Production in the Early Nineteenth Century* (London, 1990).

²¹ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 14 November 1863.

²² *Echo*, Friday, 9 November 1883.

²³ John Stephen Flynn, *Sir Robert N. Fowler, A Memoir* (London, 1893).

²⁴ *Echo*, Friday, 9 November 1883.

²⁵ *Graphic*, Saturday, 4 October 1884.

Ideas of individual aspiration and social mobility were only a couple of ways that City opinion was represented to the public. Another was the Show's continuing image of peace, good order and consensus. The pageant of 1853 continued as 'a procession of All Nations' but this time the crowd, it was thought, was greatly increased in the expectation that the days of the Lord Mayor's Show were numbered, not least by the establishment of the Royal Commission to adjudicate on the Corporation's future. Threats to the civic City failed to impede a re-vamped ritual, which linked the Banner of Justice and the Banner of Peace and Prosperity, with icons from France, Russia, Spain, Greece, Italy, China, Germany, India, Turkey, North America, Persia and South America. Lord Mayor Sidney (1805-1889) contributed financially to his Day and justified its worth by directly comparing the order and peace of the City, as the centre of Empire, to less fortunate nations elsewhere. However, readings of coexistent sources do not easily detect a rapid transition to order, often associated with the post-Chartist years. Instead it was reported how the working classes would travel to the City by 'cheap return tickets, issued by several railways, to leave their rural cots, and take a view of the Lord Mayor's Show'. Here, on the edge of the City in Fleet Street, the report went on, 'we noticed an immense mob of roughs, with scarcely a hat or cap among the whole number, and every respectably dressed person who came in their way was literally robbed of his hat, and ill treated if he ventured to expostulate with the ruffians'.²⁶ Before the celebrations of 1866 *The Times* thought that the 'day of pageants had gone', dismissing them in the context of the Lord Mayor's Show and its attendant lawlessness, as 'absurd exhibitions in the streets as being as much opposed to taste as they are to sobriety and order'.²⁷ Its reputation as an event that promoted disorder continued into 1867. The Lord Mayor elect, W.F. Allen (1816-1877), refused to use the traditional coach for the cavalcade, 'preferring not only to use his own, but to curtail the length of the procession'.²⁸ The reasons for this low profile may lie in a more general fear of social unrest. During the Show itself 'a stone was maliciously and stupidly thrown at the Lord Mayor's carriage, and an egg at each of the Sheriffs'. Although this could hardly be seen as a harbinger of the Paris

²⁶ *The Times*, Saturday, 14 November 1863.

²⁷ *The Times*, Saturday, 10 November 1866.

²⁸ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 16 November 1867.

Commune, *The Times* thundered on: 'here and there men and women were heard chanting the last dying speech and farewell to the world of the Lord Mayor's Show who suffered the extreme penalty of law, Saturday, November 9 1867'.²⁹ The 'Last Dying Speech' was sold as a satire on the Streets Act for a halfpenny each on the day of the pageant, with the complaint that 'they're stopping all pleasure except for the swells'. In a more serious tone, the *Daily Telegraph* reported how

a crowd of the long-shore men, who have in former years been employed to carry banners, and who have looked forward to five shillings and a good dinner as part of the established order of things on Lord Mayor's Day, joined, with an especial heartiness, the crowd of hooting, groaning, hissing, laughing, yelling, and jeering followers. So loud and earnest were they in their revellings and reproaches, and so nearly did their cries resemble threats that at one period an attack on the coach seemed an impending danger. But, probably forewarned, the guard of the police and military showed a strength sufficient to overawe the discontented and the violently disposed.³⁰

The pageant endured these attacks to come back in the following year to 'accustomed pomp and customary crowds'. By the 1870s, however, not only had calls reached a pitch for its status to be changed to that of a summer 'holiday show', but the Judicature Act that abolished the Barons of the Exchequer (and thereby the rationale for the procession to Westminster) meant that the Lord Mayor-elect and his pageant were temporarily all dressed up with nowhere to go.³¹ In 1875, the year after the Conservatives won three out of four seats of the City's parliamentary constituency, 'to help Imperialism and to stave off reform', Lord Mayor Stone, (1812-1890), a Conservative, commented that far from the Show being diminished, it had grown in strength over the years.³² As

²⁹ *The Times*, Thursday, 7 November 1867.

³⁰ *Daily Telegraph*, Monday, 11 November 1867.

³¹ *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 November 1872, could report that 'Although the proposal that the day should be made a Bank Holiday still remains a proposal only, the Committee of the Stock Exchange have ordered a holiday there, and but little business has been done in the City'.

³² *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 13 November 1875.

if to address this phenomenon in 1880, the *Daily Telegraph* spoke of the City as the 'finest site in Europe', and its Show as being 'alive with holiday makers'.³³ It was boasted:

We islanders possess nothing to exhibit to a foreigner better than the striking mass of orderly people which lined the roadways, filled the windows, and clambered to the chimney tops along the route from Guildhall to Westminster yesterday afternoon to see the Lord Mayor's Show go by. Their number was incalculable, their behaviour beyond praise. Such a calm and well-conducted concourse of that vast array of sober citizens, innocent of spies and independent of supervision, could not be matched in any foreign city in the world. The pageant glittered bravely in the sunshine, but the spectators far outvied the Show as a source of national pride.³⁴

The faces staring back at the occupants of the passing coaches were imagined as the loyal subjects of Agincourt or Waterloo, not the enflamed mob-handed ranks of those gathered at the scene of the Manchester massacre of 1819, or even those that passed by on the Chartist march of 1848. This calm was in apparent contrast to the Show of 1867, where it was recorded that the 'roughs, pushing all together, got to the front, and presented to the observation of spectators in the windows a sea of human force, so dirty, so villainous, and so degraded, as to make one wonder whether he could possibly be gazing at a street scene in the greatest, the richest, and the most civilised City in the World'.³⁵ Like changing representations of 'Arry' the Cockney, 'a joint product of the music halls and the 1867 Reform Act', the crowds watching the Show had apparently been pacified.³⁶

³³ *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday, 10 November 1880; *Echo*, Thursday, 9 November 1882, 'To the young people engaged in offices, warehouses, workrooms and shops, Lord Mayor's Day comes as a welcome break in the long period of otherwise unbroken toil which intervenes between the August Bank Holiday and Christmas'.

³⁴ *Daily Telegraph*, Wednesday, 10 November 1880.

³⁵ *The Daily News*, Monday, 11 November 1867.

³⁶ Gareth Stedman Jones, 'The Cockney and the Nation, 1780-1988' in David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds.), *Metropolis London - Histories and Representations Since 1800* (London, 1989).

Whether the spectator or 'consumer' of this ceremonial event could be described as passive in their responses, and this is doubtful, one of the features of the Show by the 1880s was an overwhelming concentration on historical images, great men and glorious events.³⁷ Lord Mayor Nottage (1822-1885), for example, stated in a published pamphlet that: 'The purpose of this year's Show is to bring before the minds of the public some of the glorious traditions of our ancient City - to see how, from time almost immemorial, the Corporation has been loyal to the Crown and true to the people'.³⁸ The Lord Mayor's Shows of the 1880s were crowded with sightseers. Thousands turned up, not just from the London suburbs and the Home Counties, but also from the Midlands, Manchester, Liverpool, Hull, York, Leeds, Bradford and Lincolnshire.³⁹ The public pageant drew on symbols from the popular memory. Once again Dick Whittington, as an incarnation of the self-made man, evoked enormous applause, and was portrayed beside the Highgate milepost listening to the lure of Bow Bells. Also amongst the armoured Knights and Barons were William the Conqueror, Richard the Lionheart, Queen Elizabeth, Fitz-Alwyne, the first Lord Mayor, Edward VI, the founder of Christ's Hospital, Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange and Sir Walter Raleigh. These were swashbuckling figures. They were all heroes of the derring-do Merchant Adventurism of finance and commerce. Closely following in the procession was a facsimile of the City's first reputed Charter dated to 1067 - the evidence from the past that gave the present legitimacy - guarded by citizens with drawn swords.

Evidence about the, by now, peaceful (or otherwise) temper of the Show is contradictory. On the one hand, it was described by *The Spectator* as 'unusually magnificent', the 'crowd which gathered to see the display was enormous, and, as *usual*, [my italics] thoroughly good tempered and obedient'.⁴⁰ Yet on the other hand, evidence that the Show was not symptomatic of the 'coma

³⁷ Charles Dellheim, *The Face of the Past, the Preservation of the Medieval Inheritance in Britain* (Cambridge, 1982); Mark Girouard, *The Return of Camelot, Chivalry and the English Gentleman* (New Haven, 1981).

³⁸ Robert Withington, *English Pageantry* (Harvard, 1918), p.122.

³⁹ *Echo*, Monday, 10 November 1884.

⁴⁰ *Spectator*, 15 November 1884.

of mid-Victorian prosperity' and peace, can be gleaned from other sources.⁴¹ For example, it was reported how:

The crowd being largely composed of roughs was very disorderly, and the police were called in to clear the ground which, however, they were unable to do until they had been compelled to make vigorous use of their staves. As soon as the police retired the roughs returned, some of them clambering up the backs of their fellows on to the stone coping from which the respectable persons within the enclosure attempted to dislodge them. Several free fights then took place, the crowd in the street commenced to pelt the Churchwardens and their friends with stones, pebbles, and apples, and matters looked very threatening when fortunately the police returned in force, and succeeded in restoring order. Several gentlemen were struck in the face with stones and sustained slight wounds.⁴²

Although this appeared largely to be confined to the crowd, and not focused on the procession or its participants, it is a different representation suggested by so much contemporary commentary.

The ornamental card for Lord Mayor Whitehead's (1834-1917) 'state procession' of 1888 is a vivid instance of this kind of commentary, and its description is worth recounting at length. The artist was Mr Linley Sambourne and the printers were Messrs. W H Collingridge of the *City Press*:

The two figures, of Fitz-Alwyne, first Lord Mayor, and Whitehead, the latest, stand out prominently in the centre of the design. Between them, at the base, are the arms of the City of London, and above, those of Lord Mayor Whitehead. Scattered in front of each lie the types of work done in their respective generations. Before Fitz-Alwyn, that is to say on the left of the card, in the centre are arranged a dagger, the curfew bell, a crossbow, a battle-axe, and other symbols of a turbulent period. In front of Lord Mayor Whitehead the civilising arts and the inventions of a peaceful age are typified. There is the penny postage stamp, the railway, the telegraph, the electric light, and an exquisite piece of pottery as representing art. Such is the leading idea. But within the scrolls on either side are depicted some prominent historical events which link together the first period with the present time. In the left top corner Lord Mayor Rokesley lies manacled in the Tower, in which he was imprisoned in the 13th century for his defence of citizens' rights. In the left

⁴¹ Victor Bailey, *The Dangerous Classes in Late Victorian England. Some Reflections on the Social Foundations of Disturbance and Order with Special Reference to London in the 1880s* (Unpublished Ph.D, University of Warwick, 1975).

⁴² *Daily News*, Tuesday, 11 November 1884.

bottom corner Sir William Walworth rides proudly along, after dispatching Wat Tyler at King Richard's command (A.D. 1381) and thus maintaining the rights of property. To the left of Fitz-Alwyn's head there is the procession of John Norman (Lord Mayor A.D. 1452) on the River Thames, that being the first procession to the Courts by water, and symbolising London's supremacy as a port. Between these two are Fitz-Alwyn's arms. On the top of the card is the Tower of London, which, unaltered, has gazed down through all the centuries upon civic change. On the right of the card and in the front of the present Lord Mayor, the defeat of the Spanish Armada typifies the struggle of the 16th century for national freedom, a work for which London volunteered thirty ships of war and 10,000 men (A.D. 1588). In the extreme right hand corner, Old St. Paul's, the type of medieval London lies smouldering in the Great Fire (A.D. 1666), which swept away most of the ancient relics of the City. Immediately beneath it the light gaiety of the times, when George the Third was King, finds a fit representation in a Fair in the Ward of Cheap, A.D. 1760; whilst in the bottom right hand corner is Her Gracious Majesty the Queen (A.D. 1878) opening Epping Forest for public use, and showing that the Crown and the Corporation are in this generation, as in others, in harmony with the movements of the age.⁴³

Being in 'harmony with the movements of the age', as it was coined, meant the display of modern artefacts, 'the inventions of a peaceful age', the railway, the telegraph, the electric light, placed alongside the narrative of a chronicle history. This juxtaposition of modernity with ideas of antiquity also occurred in 1889. The seven hundredth anniversary of the Mayoralty prompted a parade of 'English Worthies', where Queen Elizabeth, Lord Bacon, John Hampton, Oliver Cromwell, the Duke of Marlborough, Sir Robert Walpole, the Earl of Chatham and the General Marquis of Granby were depicted. Each was claimed to be related by blood to a Lord Mayor or Alderman. Like a panorama of an Edwardian show which featured a representation of Wellington walking alongside Painted banners, it sought to include the good and the great as part of its extended family. This representation featured a silhouetted background, the imperious buildings of Temple Bar, the Tower of London, Nelson's Column and the Houses of Parliament. As a procession of all the ages, it was able to gather differing political traditions to itself. Among its number we can count Chaucer, Thomas More, Shakespeare, Dickens, King Arthur, Tom Thumb, Charles 1 (grudgingly clinging to his crown) and Wilkes, with equal animation, grasping the Cap of Liberty. (Appendix One, Figure

⁴³ (C.L.R.O) 557 (LMD/1- LMD/8), *Files containing information of arrangements for Lord Mayor's Day and Associated Ceremonies.*

Six) All of these figures had become part of the continuity of the English: thrown together and thereby deradicalised; members all of 'Our Island Race'. In 1890, the Show having earlier failed to secure the appearance of the heroes of Rorke's Drift, featured the Crimean heroes instead. Setting a trend that was to continue, national affairs were set alongside municipal concerns such as the voluntary fire and lifeboat services from a 'Greater Britain'. The knight (a source of continuous past mockery) had been replaced by living, and immediate war veterans. 'We laugh, perhaps, at the 'ancient knight' - but we do not smile at the old soldier'. ⁴⁴ This trend continued past the 1880s into the 1890s and beyond. ⁴⁵

(iv)

Unlike its counterpart in 1848, the Show of 1886 was chilly, damp, drizzling and rather dark. The unemployed protesters followed the Lord Mayor's coach and the City's share of 8,000 constables on foot and 300 mounted on duty throughout the metropolis, along with military reserves, watched for signs of lawbreaking. In the event there was no violence but the scene is, nevertheless, instructive. Raised as a national focus of discontent and as a voice of the establishment, and the Conservative establishment at that, it was not the first time that malcontents would make the Show a place where they could 'terrorise the old scoundrel' (the Lord Mayor) and 'stage a big riot'. More often than not it seemed to be in the spirit of the hopeful gate crasher rather than that of a vanguard expecting active support. ⁴⁶ After the Show in 1886, passing between symbols alluding to the Colonial and Indian Exhibition, effusive ward decorations, purpose-built

⁴⁴ Robert Withington, *'English Pageantry'*, p. 126.

⁴⁵ Robert Withington, *'English Pageantry'*, p.128; The Show of 1896 was entitled 'England and Her Heroes', spotlighting various military uniforms from different epochs. As Withington put it, 'It can hardly have awakened civic pride; it appeals rather to a sense of national glory'. The 'Khaki Show' of 1914, acting as a recruiting sergeant for the war, proved to be the high water mark of this process. The leader in *The Times* summoned forth titans from the past. Pitt and Nelson, amongst others, were called upon in a situation where 'All that the wisdom and the valour of our fathers have wrought for a thousand years is at stake'. The appeal was to a 'shared culture', and the 'limbs that bind our race', see *The Times*, Tuesday, 10 November 1914. Finally, the enterprise to re-build a consensual past, through the use of history, may said to have been completed when a Mr John B. Thorp, an 'old Blue' and 'City Man', made a model in 1929 of the seventeenth century Show for an exhibition at the Royal Horticultural Hall, replete with a 'gramophone record of the ringing of Bow Bells, and of people cheering the Lord Mayor'. See *City Press*, 6 September 1929.

⁴⁶ Donald C. Richter, *Riotous Victorians* (London, 1981), pp. 140, 141.

stands filled with thousands of well-dressed spectators and to the backdrop of the children of the ward schools singing the national anthem, the unemployed made their way to the main protest in Trafalgar Square. As the Socialist factions gathered around Nelson's column, delivered speeches and passed resolutions amidst red flags fluttering skyward, the Life Guides rode up Northumberland Avenue and the police attacked from every side of the square. At the same moment, back in the City, the Prime Minister, and the Marquis of Salisbury, settled down to dinner at the Lord Mayor's Banquet in Guildhall to deliver an important political address.⁴⁷

However peaceful, or however dramatic, increasingly the importance of the public aspects of the Show, staged outside in the street, were in reality relegated in favour of the Banquet held behind closed doors. As early as 1863 Palmerston's speech on 'Public Affairs' at the Banquet after the Show gave a flavour of its more meaningful function: 'It is well known that the transaction of businesses are made much easier when those who meet to carry them on know and like each other; and therefore I say that these meetings are of great political importance in bringing together those who are connected with the commerce of the country and those who are responsible for its political government'.⁴⁸ However, the *Illustrated London News* protested a decade later that 'no political importance attaches to the ceremonies of the day. The citizens of London wisely keep separate municipal and imperial politics. Few people came to inquire to what party the new Lord Mayor belongs, and the welcome given to Her Majesty's Ministers have seldom any perceptible relation to the political doctrines they profess to represent'.⁴⁹ This apparent contradiction is not easily explained, particularly in the light of the political interests of many members of the Corporation recorded in Appendix Two. Now there appeared to be a clear demarcation - in terms of those participating in both parts of the day's ceremonies - between the public street pageant and the private Banquet. Consequently, those that lined the streets for the procession were now different from those who sat on the high tables of the Guildhall. Similarly at this time, the seating plans for the Banquet were overwhelmingly given over to the Livery Companies and the wards. Their members in turn, at this time, were given over to citizens of every stamp: 'Admirals and tailors, orators and glaziers, ambassadors and pawnbrokers, ..huddled cheek by jowl together; no man

⁴⁷ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 13 November 1886.

⁴⁸ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 14 November 1863.

⁴⁹ *Illustrated London News*, Saturday, 15 November 1873.

knew his neighbour, and, therefore, all confidence being at an end, each is satisfied with observing the proceedings and the aspect of the Company around him'.⁵⁰ Later, the nature of the property-based constituency meant that only the chosen few entering the privileged area of the Guildhall were 'permitted to pass the barrier which excluded the promiscuous population of London from the scene of the approaching festivity'.⁵¹ If this was raised as an informal and equalitarian space of sociability and conviviality, it was occupied by those of (relative) education and, more importantly perhaps, by men.

By the 1880s the seating plan within the Guildhall no longer encouraged even this plurality. Surrounded by monuments to the past - Chatham, Pitt, Beckford, Wellington and Nelson - sat the Lord Mayor and Lady Mayoress. In the western end of the hall, from table one to five sat the distinguished numbers of the Liveryman and ward members. In front of them, in a semi-circular shape around the 'top table', sat on one side the 'great officers of the state and others'. Directly in front of the Lord Mayor were the 'Cabinet Ministers and Ambassadors', and still further around towards the east, the Judges. On the inside track, still moving from east to west were the Aldermen. Inside of this pincer movement sitting on tables 'B' to 'G' were the 'Senior Sheriff's Friends', and the burgeoning contingent of the Press, and the functionaries of the state: ministerial and permanent officials such as the civil service. On tables 'D' and 'E' sat the Lord Mayor's friends. On the next table was placed the City Chief Officers and Metropolitan members, and lastly, the remaining 'Friends' of the Lord Mayor and assorted officers.⁵² There was little of the revelry of earlier years either. Incidents such as that when Viscount Melbourne was jeered inside the Guildhall had become very rare indeed.⁵³ (When Ramsay MacDonald was 'barracked' in 1933, it was described by the *Daily Sketch* as 'unprecedented'.) The only sense of the Hall as a contested area came from outside, when 'suffragettes [broke] a window and demanded from Mr Asquith the right to a

⁵⁰ [Anon. by Richard Howell?], *Sketches; by Curio* (1856), p. 172.

⁵¹ [Anon. by Richard Howell?], *Sketches; by Curio* (1856), p. 161.

⁵² (C.L.R.O.) Misc. Mss. 255.3 *The Seating Plan for the Banquet* (1880).

⁵³ To give one instance of this change we can recall the reception given to Viscount Melbourne's speech in 1836. The Banquet resembled the hustings, and the addresses could easily have been spoken outside: 'On presenting himself, [he] was received with mingled cheers and hisses. The latter in some quarters seemed for a time to predominate, but the stentorian lungs of a coterie of Radical Common Councilmen made no weak, though somewhat ineffectual efforts to drown the expressions of disapprobation'. *The Times*, Thursday, 1 November 1836.

parliamentary vote'.⁵⁴ Rather, 'the whole scene at this point is one of great splendour, the ladies dresses and jewels, the military and other uniforms, the judges and the Alderman's scarlet robes, and the magazine gowns of the Common Councilmen make a magnificent spectacle'.⁵⁵

The official and developing political stance of the City throughout the mid and late part of the century, however, could be more obviously discerned in their silences than in their words. When the Tory Leader Sir Robert Peel was greeted at the Banquet after the Show 'loudly and cordially', he was reminded by the Lord Mayor that although the City remained loyal, it differed from Her Majesty's Ministers in political opinion and allegiance. In short, a polite and formal language was adopted between political opponents. Accordingly, in 1858 the Earl of Derby replying to the toast of the Lord Mayor David Williams Wire (1801-1860), eschewed party politics.⁵⁶ In 1871 it was emphasised that 'in this Hall we know no politics'.⁵⁷ In 1873 Gladstone spoke of Lord Mayor Lusk's 'priceless treasure, his own personal honour and independence',⁵⁸ in 1874 it was noted that 'though the meeting was distinctly Conservative, there were no too boisterous party congratulations',⁵⁹ and in 1878 Disraeli spoke of showing 'no intention of touching on the forbidden province of party politics'.⁶⁰ In sum, between the 1860s and 1880s three points stand out. Firstly, successive Lord Mayors (despite often being politically active as Members of Parliament and so forth) protested their independence from party politics on behalf of the City.⁶¹ Secondly, the importance of the Lord Mayor as an individual declined; the office was posited instead - along with

⁵⁴ Alfred John Glasspool, *The Corporation of the City of London; Its Ceremonies and Importance* (London, 1924).

⁵⁵ J. J. Baddeley, *A Guide to the Guildhall of the City of London- Together With A Short Account of its Historic Associations, And the Municipal Work Carried On Therein* (London, 1898).

⁵⁶ Richard Seyd, *After the Turtle: Thirty One Years Ministerial Policy as Set Forth at Lord Mayor's Day Banquets from 1848* (1878), p. 24.

⁵⁷ *Echo*, Friday, 10 November 1871.

⁵⁸ Richard Seyd, 'After the Turtle', p. 92.

⁵⁹ *Echo*, Tuesday, 10 November 1874.

⁶⁰ Richard Seyd, 'After the Turtle', p. 94.

⁶¹ In the 1920s, City MPs claimed that they were in some special way 'independent' of the party machine to which they belonged. See R.S. Sayers, *The Bank of England Vol.2* (Cambridge, 1976), pp 597-98. I am grateful to Philip Williamson for this reference.

the Show outside - as a national icon. Thirdly, the sort of work-a-day people that had once sat 'cheek by jowl' in the Banquet had now been effectively excluded.

Instead there was an explicit reference to a hierarchy of citizenship, and this fact was reflected in the issuing of tickets for the Banquet. There were essentially four levels of admission: one for the gentleman; a card to admit the Ladies; a servants ticket; and one for the poor to receive provisions or leftovers at twelve o' clock the next day. The first requested 'court dress or uniform if desired'; to the last 'no early answer was required'.⁶² This change was symptomatic of a new Conservative politics, an intersection of finance, civic government and the state. In other words, although the protestations that the City was still the bastion of independence, of civil and religious freedom, or that its institutions represented a living community, in reality only the image survived and only then, to adopt Habermas, in a 'distorted guise'.⁶³ Distorted because the personality of the Lord Mayor, like the independence of the City, was submerged, stranded without a popular constituency and raised instead as a national icon. It is for these reasons that the report of the Lord Mayor's Show in 1876 described the Lord Mayor as the First Magistrate in the First City of the Empire, and in 1878 he was regarded as 'England's Glory and Chief Support'. On 1 July 1889, when Lord Mayor Whitehead gave a lunch to the Shah of Persia which the royal family attended, the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury, in reply to the Lord Mayor's speech, said 'You spoke just now of being the mouthpiece of the City. On this occasion you are much more. You are the mouthpiece of the entire nation'.⁶⁴

In 1883 the swearing in of the Lord Mayor was performed for the last time at Westminster Hall, thereafter it would be performed at the Royal Courts of Justice. This was significant because it meant that the public, who had previously enjoyed free access to the ceremony, were replaced by barristers in robes and spectators who could only enter on the production of a ticket. The legal aspects of the day, like the Banquet, had been rarefied. It was a process of closure that had begun earlier when admission to the Common Hall, the open forum of City opinion, was delimited.⁶⁵ This

⁶² (C.L.R.O) Box 1 (504) *Lord Mayor's Day, Ornamental Tickets/Invitations 1791-1884*.

⁶³ Robert C. Holub, *Jurgen Habermas - Critic in the Public Sphere* (London, 1991), p.6.

⁶⁴ Quoted in Valerie Hope, *My Lord Mayor* (London, 1989), p. 158.

⁶⁵ (C.L.R.O.) 315 A. *Committees Livery [of Common Hall] Appointed to consider and take measures for the admission of Liverymen and exclusion of strangers at meetings of Common Hall- 4 July, 1864- 24 June, 1913*.

was the final leg in the journey from what might be described as a culture debating to a culture-consuming public sphere.⁶⁶ The arena in which, 'The public sphere becomes the court *before* whose public prestige can be displayed - rather than *in* which critical debate is carried on'.⁶⁷ This was the realisation of Toulmin's warning regarding the abandonment of local self-government, and is why the Shows of the 1880s and beyond were simply faked versions of those that had gone before, devoid of real community involvement.

(v)

So far it has been established that the representations of the Show in the period under review were derived from, and part of, the evolving politics of the City. Where once citizens lined the streets as active participants in the event now, it would seem, they passively consumed its messages from the sidelines. In concert with ideas of a transformation to order and social peace after 1848, notions of the 'people' were limited to the middle class, the City was represented as a centre of finance capital and, although spectators attended, often as 'holiday-makers', they did not challenge what had become a national spectacle. These images of public ceremonies may have been 'mass produced' in order to generate public consent to the state and social relations that effectively excluded mass representation'.⁶⁸ Or alternatively, images of the Lord Mayor's Show were employed, theoretically at least, as a focus of opposition to the state and its representatives.

Consequently ridicule, rather than the 'hostile outburst', was more often put to use as an informal form of protest by those lining the route of the Lord Mayor's Show. Art and pantomime, like the artefacts of ceremony, offered other visual representations that countered the dominant image of the City as the centre of finance capital. Although the use of satire has often noted by historians - particularly in its role as conduit for imperialist propaganda - it has usually been dwarfed beneath its apparently authentic purpose that was to act as a form of 'social discipline'.⁶⁹ Faced with what one

⁶⁶ Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), p. 159.

⁶⁷ Jürgen Habermas, 'Structural Transformation', p. 201.

⁶⁸ L. Davidoff, 'Class and Gender in Victorian England', in Judith L. Newton et al. (eds.), *Sex and Class in Women's History* (London, 1981), pp. 17-71.

⁶⁹ J. M. Mackenzie, *Propaganda and Empire - The Manipulation of Public Opinion 1880-1914* (London, 1984).

commentator has called the 'manufacture of the past in nineteenth century art', the artist takes on the burden of participant in what became intuitive or received wisdom.⁷⁰ One instance of how this dominant image of the City was created by the use of representations is Hogarth's *Industry and Idleness* series depicting 'The Industrious Lord Mayor of London'. The frantic 'mob' in Hogarth's twelfth engraving of the series can be set against the apparent order of the crowd in the Victorian era. The *Illustration of the Lord Mayor's Procession, 9th November 1861*, for example, made acute observations upon and between gender and class differences within the crowd. (Appendix One, Figure Seven) Although many of the faces appear to be stylised, bonneted and caped 'genteel' women are depicted clinging to the arms of much taller men. They are characterised by their smooth features and white hands, whereas women of 'lower station' are smaller and more pugnacious in profile. Similarly, men of varying classes are marked out by height as well as dress and colouring. In fact one of the group of 'gentlemen' is set apart by conspicuous possession of an umbrella, while another is bearded. There are also subtle shifts in the way the Show is portrayed within the nineteenth century. William Logsdail's (1859-1944) painting *The Ninth of November - Sir James Whitehead's Procession - 1888*, completed in 1890, not only portrays a central landscape of social diversity, but is actually peopled. (Appendix One, Figure Eight) Top-hatted gentlemen, bonneted women, minstrels, the working man and off-duty 'Tommy' are standing besides 'Peelers' both on horseback and on foot. Certainly, it appears to emphasise an ordered plurality of classes and 'types', a crowd deprived of revolutionary potential perhaps, but by their very presence at the City's hub they remain, to some degree, subversive; at least holding out the possibility of a discursive politics. From this perspective, far from the Lord Mayor's Show being regarded as a 'decorative filigree' it was, like the institutions of the City's centre and their gathering in the Banquet, a cultural and political construction founded in social relations and not just in functional economic categories.⁷¹ Interestingly Whitehead's procession was also represented in a contemporary cartoon, and although the subject matter is recognisably similar, its interpretation differs. (Appendix

⁷⁰ Francis Haskell, *Past and Present in Art and Taste* (Yale University Press, 1987), esp, 'The Manufacture of the Past in Nineteenth Century Painting', pp. 75-90; Francis Haskell, *History and its Images: Art and the Interpretation of the Past* (Yale University Press, 1993).

⁷¹ A point made by Nigel Thrift, 'On the Social and Cultural Determinants of International Centres: the Case of the City of London' in Stuart Corbridge et al., (eds.) *Money, Power and Space* (Oxford, 1994).

One, Figure Nine) Nevertheless, the point that the City was still portrayed in terms of its community life and not simply as a reflection of its financial institutions, endures.

Similar points might be made of popular theatre. In a production of *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, performed in Covent Garden in 1814, Alderman Fitzwarren was depicted as a Jewish merchant, a device also employed for another production at the Pavilion, Mile End Road in 1904. In the first case the character was parochial, while in the second, performed as it was in the year preceding the Aliens Act, the connotations took on a larger national context. In the 1852 pantomime at Sadler's Wells, *Whittington and his Cat; or, Old Dame Fortune, and Harlequin Lord Mayor of London*, Whittington's arch-enemy was a City worker the 'designing clerk', Inkpen.⁷² Towards the end of the century the complaint made against pantomime was one of 'vulgarity' as they were unfavourably compared to the music hall. In this sense it would be difficult to imagine that the mockery of the City, and its dignitaries (Common Councillor John Lobb was another victim in a production of *Jack and the Beanstalk* at Drury Lane) could have been anything other than part of the experience. The central message of Dick Whittington relayed in the Lord Mayor's Show - despite its doubtful English pedigree - may not have been wholly absorbed, as for many the hope of a truly open society remained elusive:

'Come on Tom', grunted Biggles, 'no chance of us becoming Lord Mayor'
'Why, here's where Whittington sat, and the bells are sayin,
'Turn back, Biggles, Lord Mayor of Lunnon'
'Tom, moaned Biggles, we're deluded. Its the cursed muffin man.
No Mansion House for us'.⁷³

In more conventional written form, *The Penny Illustrated News* also depicted the excluding nature of the Lord Mayor's Show by showing huddled and ragged figures from 'Outcast London', under a slogan taken as a pastiche from the motto of the Royal Exchange: 'The Earth is the Lord's and the Fullness Thereof - Some Figures Omitted in the Lord Mayor's Show- Suggested as a Subject for A

⁷² A. E. Wilson, *Pantomime Pageant* (London, 1946), p. 33; Gerald Frow, *Oh, Yes It Is - A History of Pantomime* (London, 1985).

⁷³ (G.L., Maps), Noble Collection, C.22.31 *Ally at the Lord Mayor's Show, Shattered Hopes - A Tale of the Ninth (1888)*

Relief At The Mansion House'.⁷⁴ A mocking attitude was always to be seen if one looked hard enough as, in 1879, when, in response to a scandal that involved the Mayoralty of Sir Charles Whetham (1812-1885) (as Chief Magistrate he had convicted a man for being in possession of photographs of naked Zulus that he judged to be indecent), his procession was 'received with hooting and derisive laughter'.⁷⁵ The same year saw the *Echo* publish a parody on its proceedings. One of its items listed, 'The modest retiring Lord Mayor, blacked all over, [who] will appear as a Zulu Warrior, attired in full dress'.⁷⁶ This incident was obviously not easily forgotten as a sketch drawn up with similar intentions was sold in the streets of London, on the day of the Show, seven years later. (Appendix One, Figure Ten) Alternative programmes to the day's events were commonly found circulating amongst the crowd and, like the *Supplement to the Official Programme of the Lord Mayor's Show* by *Deputy Chaff-Wax* in 1883, they also used raillery as a potent weapon:

The services of the City Trumpeters will be dispensed with, the Lord Mayor having signified his intention of blowing his own, for which service he is eminently qualified

The Banners of the City Knights will be emblazoned with the new device - 'Real Turtle and Mock Titles'

Banner of Lord Mayor Fowler, with the device 'The Motto for Liberals permit me to mention, 'Bradlaugh and Blasphemy is my invention'

The Splendid Banner of the League, with the device -
'Why Should London Wait',

Bourne by Messrs, Firth, Beal, Lloyd and Phillips

A Cartoon of Lazarus and Dives representing

On One side - Civic Satraps dining -

On the other, 'Out-Cast London' - pining

The Wonderful Bill of the Civic Banquet which cost 27, 000!!!

Will be carried by the Common Council who ate it,
to amuse the people who paid for it

⁷⁴ *Penny Illustrated News*, 15 November 1879; *The Tomahawk*, 2 November 2 1867; *Fun*, 11 November 1871; *Walter Pelham's Illustrated Journal*, 15 November 1879.

⁷⁵ *Echo*, Monday, 10 November 1879.

⁷⁶ *Echo*, Saturday, 1 November 1879.

The Trophies of Our Colonies will be followed by the
Trophies of our London Slums
Followed by Nemesis !!

Colonel Haywood's Bishopsgate Tenants
The Banner of the Union will be followed by 90, 000 London Paupers
Lord Mayor Fowler

Will be preceded by a Herald who will announce the fact that
His Lordship represents some 200 nobodies and will shine for
Twelve months in the reflected light of FOUR MILLIONS but
In consideration of his gentleness, dignity, and urbanity
And in the hope that he will be

The Last of the Shams
He must be tolerated accordingly
This tomfoolery will now be brought to a close
In a very appropriate way, sir,
By Alderman Finis and corpulent Innes,
And Alderman Polly Decay Sir ⁷⁷

This sense of a resistance to the 'manipulation of the citizenry' can also be discerned in the Show 1884, where 'a ghastly effigy of the dead Wat Tyler, with upturned face and glazed eyes' was one of the more macabre representations. ⁷⁸ Provoking a storm of protest, particularly in the Liberal press, one letter signed 'POLL TAX' reminded readers that historicist voices could speak for a wider definition of the 'people':

...it is well known that Wat Tyler met his death through advocating that which every Englishman at the present day is proud of possessing - namely, freedom of commerce and exemption from the villainage of slavery. It is not today, when the People are determined to obtain greater voting power and to squelch the Lord, that they will tamely stand by and see the degrading and disgusting spectacle which is proposed to be incorporated in the 'Show'. If this portion of the programme is carried out it will for the People themselves to declare what they think of it.

⁷⁷ G.L (Prints), Noble Collection, C22.31, *Deputy Chaff-Wax Supplement to the Official Programme of the Lord Mayor's Show* (1883).

⁷⁸ *The Daily News*, Tuesday, 11 November 1884.

'CARACTACUS', in partial reply, and with more than a hint of irony, declared that 'POLL TAX' 'can scarcely expect the members of the Corporation to abandon the old tradition of 'Glory to the Victors', and 'Woe to the Vanquished'. In their view Wat Tyler was simply 'one of the common herd', who, not being content to be one of the 'dumb driven cattle', was dangerous, and was necessarily destroyed. Some day we may see statues of old defenders of our native soil and liberties [replacing] the effigies of royal tyrants and libertines'.⁷⁹ This is why when Lord Mayor Walworth was seen standing over the slain Wat Tyler during the procession, it provoked groans and hisses from the crowd.

Also in the manner of opposition, the 'Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society' held a debate in the Bethnal Green Road Chapel. They were divided between those who wished to defend the Show against those who were 'intent upon improving us off the face of the earth', and those who, more simply, opposed the 'standstill, destructive party'. A champion of the first view protested that

the Lord Mayor's procession is more than an empty show..a show like this deserves to be perpetuated; not only because it is worthy of the first magistrate of the first City of the World; not only because it is an encouraging stimulus to youth; not only because it exerts a salutary influence in checking the overheating pursuit after wealth; but because it furnishes an instructive link with some of the great epochs of our country's history which we cherish with all the fondness of a generous patriotism, and from which we deduce some of our highest incentives to personal and national heroism.

In reply to this advocate for the City, the speaker for the opposite persuasion saw the Show as 'the laughing stock of Europe. It is never alluded to except as a joke. My friend must have a very vivid imagination indeed if those poor awkward squads dressed up in tin and tinsel from Astley's [theatre] call up before his mind the grand old day's of chivalry about which he is so elegant? Does he think of those brilliant standard bearers as representing the commerce of London, and was ever the imagination more put to the rack?'⁸⁰ The City Corporation was sufficiently concerned about this

⁷⁹ *Echo*, Wednesday, 5 November 1884; *Echo*, Thursday, 6 November 1884.

⁸⁰ Alfred Dale, *A Debate on the Question: Ought the Lord Mayor's Show to be Abolished? - Written for the Occasion of the soiree of the Bethnal Green Road Chapel Young Men's Mutual Improvement Society, As a Playful Exercise* (1873).

kind of attack to employ professional help, albeit from the ranks of the Common Council, to direct a 'new' Lord Mayor's Show with a brief to 'aspire to the invention of a new style of pageant where with to raise the time-honoured Lord Mayor's Show from the mud of ridicule in to which it has gradually been sinking for some years past'.⁸¹

Both the Show and the Banquet, celebrated tradition and emphasised, at the same time, organic identities - reaching out to one Nation - through its 'age-old' institutions.⁸² In this way it was trenchantly Conservative. The City, according to its supporters, had 'enjoyed six hundred years of municipal liberty and dignity, based upon the traditions of our Saxon ancestry (which) had made the Corporation of London an example of unrivalled stability'.⁸³ Later, to its opponents like Labour's Herbert Morrison, the City represented 'entrenched reaction, [the] home of the devilry of modern finance'.⁸⁴ The Show may have been pre or anti-modern in appearance, but its true role was both rational and modern. As one commentator put it, 'City ceremonial provides the vulgar fascination of seeing hard wealth translated into a soft, creamy spectacle of robes, chains, carriages, invitations, banquets, flunkies and trumpets. It hoists just the right kind of expensive, decorative backcloth behind the money making'.⁸⁵ However, far from simply forming a 'backcloth' to the commercial and financial functions of the City, the civic Lord Mayor and his Show drew a veil over its true persona, acting in effect, if not in intention, as a public camouflage to the Banquet held in private. A Conservative City wedded to the state, as we have already seen through its commitment to technical education and the sponsoring of business interests and through its informal alliances with City based militaristic organisations, simply used 'its semiotic capacity to make inequality enchant'.⁸⁶ Politics had changed dramatically. The Lord Mayor's Show had in this

⁸¹ L. Wingfield, 'How I Directed a Lord Mayor's Show', *New Review*, 1, (1889).

⁸² For the politics of the inclusion and exclusion in the definition of 'Englishness', see Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (eds.), *Englishness, Politics and the National Character 1880-1920* (London, 1987); See also the three volumes of Raphael Samuel (ed) *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity* (London, 1989).

⁸³ William Purdie Treloar, *Wilkes and the City* (London, 1917), p. xii.

⁸⁴ Quoted by I.G. Doolittle, *The City of London and the Livery Companies* (London, 1982), p. 142.

⁸⁵ Paul Ferris, *The City* (London, 1960), p. 215.

⁸⁶ C. Geertz, *Negara: The Theater-State in Nineteenth-Century Bali* (Princeton, 1980), p. 123.

way gifted the City a coherent identity and was to the Conservative imagination, and its middle-class adherents, its first parish.

Conclusion

Deputy Frederick Farrar, a City solicitor, was seventy-eight years old when he met his death in a road accident on the slippery slope of Ludgate Hill in February 1883. Elected to the Common Council in 1840, he was the Father of the Court. Over this period he had witnessed tremendous changes within the City. In terms of its physical transition, banks and purpose-built offices had overtaken the counting house, the small manufacturer and the warehouse. A residential population had almost gone, to be replaced by an ever increasing workforce that travelled into the City on a daily basis from the suburbs, although a correspondent to the *City Press* could still complain of cruelty to animals in the late-1870s, as cattle, goats and sheep were driven through the City.¹ Places of worship within the City had adapted to this change, but like the taverns and markets, they were thought of as survivals from a past age. The real objects of desire appeared to be those marbled and glass monuments to modernity that, like imperialism itself, were reaching upwards and outwards. Politically the Corporation was now Conservative, where once it had been Whig. The centre of civic activity was no longer the wardmote or the inquest committee, but the club and association. Indeed, where once Farrar's death would have been announced in the forum of a discrete locality, perhaps meeting in a tavern, now it was broadcast from the United Wards Club at the Raglan Hotel on Aldersgate Street. The meetings had become 'respectable' and the elections 'smug', ordered by the overwhelming interests of 'compact coteries'.² The City's Livery Companies had also been transformed, its good offices and expansive coffers now used within a voluntarist context to prop up a free trade economy rapidly being caught by its industrial rivals. Members of the Corporation by now were more likely to contribute to anti-collectivist and militaristic organisations than to agitate, as Toulmin had done in Farringdon Without, for the rights of the Free Born Englishman. The City had abandoned its precious independence in the course of Farrar's life; far from opposing the state in many ways it now enjoined it. An older vision of the City, represented in

¹ *City Press*, Wednesday, 13 August 1879.

² *City Life*, 1,4, Monday, 23 December 1889.

the Lord Mayor's Show, used the 'present to haunt the past', and to advance, politically, the cause of what this thesis has labelled 'Real Liberalism'.³

Yet the City proved itself as much a community in its response to the unemployment crisis in 1886, as it had done in 1848. On each occasion the result was to redefine the meaning of citizenship: latterly to include the non-resident ratepayer; to emphasise the City's commercial and national importance, and to point up the unique place that the Corporation occupied in representing it. Consequently, in the same moment that its national importance was erected as a way of defending its status as a locality, as well as a unit of local government, it identified a new constituency. As the City Corporation sought to represent first the wholesaler, then the shop-keeper and thereafter the banker and the merchant, it moved these groups in turn to the cultural centre, while consistently the lumpen poor were banished to the outskirts of the City, out of mind and apparently out of sight, both to contemporary and historian alike. The deliberate policy by the Corporation of defining for itself a constituency and re-inventing it over time, (and its role in the ways that the City has since been represented), may have been continued by Benjamin Scott (by now a founding member of the New Bank of London) but it had a starting point with Charles Pearson. It was this representation of the City that Toulmin and others resisted.⁴

By 1874 it appeared that a sea-change had been affected: the outgoing Lord Mayor Lusk noted that 'vulgar crime' had declined; although crime had increased amongst persons of education. In other words, drunkenness, pickpocketing and assaults had given way to embezzlements, forgeries, fraudulent debtors, and more general conspiracies to defraud.⁵ Despite this, the City of finance borrowed the language and imagery of the civic City to represent itself as a moral community. It was noted with pride by contemporaries that Lady Rothschild provided a brace of pheasants each Christmas for the drivers of the omnibuses, displaying the 'spirit' of the City which, then and now, was conceived as a village while its government practised, as a recent conceit would have it, 'the politics of the parish pump'. The City in this account was hard headed and practical, a Club with rules and traditions but one also indulgent of its 'characters'. It was thought to be honest: the motto of the Stock Exchange was 'Dictum imium pactum' (my word is my bond); at Lloyds it was

³ J.F.N. Jeffries, *London and Better* (London, 1936), p. 62.

⁴ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 November 1874.

⁵ (C.L.R.O.) 646 D *Magistrates Charges Books*, 20 July 1860-11 August 1880; (C.L.R.O.) 646 F 3 *Summons Books* December 1853-7 May 1859.

'a Fidentia' (with the utmost good faith) and at the Baltic Exchange, 'our word is our bond'.⁶ Above all it conflated the rights of property with the defence of constitution, and guarded both in equal measure.

This identity developed and became a feature of the City's community at large. Henry Peek MP of the Commercial Union, for example, was embroiled in a long-running battle during the 1870s with the Revd. Arthur Trower of St. Mary-at-Hill, ostensibly over the fate of the glebe of a church in which Peek was a sponsor. Accusations of criminal damage, Ritualism, the sacking of Trower's son, the despatchment of bailiffs by Peek on Christmas Day, were all part of the unpleasant, ungodly picture. The point is that Peek had another existence as a member of the community, and as a glance at the *City of London Directory* suggests, Trower also had a financial stake by virtue of a wine merchant business listed at the same disputed property.⁷

The Corporation became aware of its place in this fluid cultural and economic complex, where personal identities were seldom fixed. It also attempted to use its venerable image as a defence against detractors proposing the modernisation of London government. The result was the apparently contradictory representations of the City: a City of antiquity was set against a City of finance, and a City thought of in reverential silence amongst its ancient places of worship was contrasted with it working amidst the din of commerce. Although the representation of the financial City predominated, each viewpoint formed the opposite campaigning positions of the opponents and defenders of the Corporation.

But a social Liberalism did survive until the 1880s. Of the City's clubs, not all marched in line into the Conservative camp. Some, such as the Bartholomew Club, began life discussing topics of the day in a highly sophisticated way and, like their first cousins in the Ratepayer Associations, took time to shake off their Liberal sympathies. In the 1870s, motions were being passed in the Municipal Club regarding the abolition of capital punishment, and in the 1880s, one member of the United Wards Club, quoting John Stuart Mill, argued for the enfranchisement of women. Another enterprising individual, a member of the Bishopsgate Ward Club, was more practical and perhaps more radical, when he called for the Corporation to provide public conveniences for women to be

⁶ Jacques Lowe et. al, *The City - The Traditions and Powerful Personalities of the World's Greatest Financial Centre* (London, 1982).

⁷ *Sir Henry William Peek, Bart, MP v the Rev. Arthur Trower (1877); The Churches of Billingsgate and Tower wards and more, in the Peek v. Trower, a collection mainly of letters to the City Press and Citizen concerning the removal of churches (1878).*

placed throughout the City.⁸ This at a time when the feminisation of the City was, with notable exceptions, an unthinkable concept. Indeed, Liberal survivals of many varieties remained as stubborn reminders to an incomplete Conservative hegemony.⁹ In 1886, for example, a City Working Men's Club - albeit with a dominant Jewish membership - formed 'A Synagogue Anti-Demolition League' in order to save Bevis Marks (the oldest Sephardic place of Jewish devotion) from destruction by its own community.¹⁰ A cross-religious co-operation that had begun with the Jews and General Literary and Scientific Institution in Leadenhall Street in the 1840s - open to all-comers - continued during the time of European pogroms. Similarly, socialistic clerks were reported in the City's offices and a short-lived Union was formed.¹¹ The National Union of Clerks was publicly inaugurated at a meeting held at South Place Chapel in June 1890 and for a time branches were organised in Belfast, Liverpool and Manchester. The image of a deferential clerk, represented by the Grossmith's character Pooter, was further undermined by unruly behaviour in the Bank of England, the forbidden playing of the stock and share market in order to augment meagre salaries, 'drunkenness', 'unpolished' table manners, and the dismissal of a Prudential agent for attending the Trade Union Congress.¹² Plus, as we have seen, the working heart of the City was anything but a space devoid of the casual or marginal worker. Indeed, in a more contemporary moment, the City has been acknowledged, by even the most conservative observers, as cosmopolitan. Technological changes such as the introduction of the typewriter meant that the 'young toughs' were eventually

⁸ *City Press*, Saturday, 10 January 1874 reported a motion that capital punishment should be abolished at the Municipal Club; G.L. (Mans) Ms. 11722-2 *Minutes of the United Wards Club, Wednesday, 19 March 1884*; G.L. (Mans) Ms. 5127 *Minutes of the Bishopsgate Ward Club, Wednesday, 6 April 1887*.

⁹ *City Press*, Saturday, 18 November 1882. Included in the category of Liberal survivals might be the City Parliamentary Debating Association (1882); the City of London College Debating Society; and the Bishopsgate Young Men's Debating Society, which passed by a majority of four votes at the Skinner Street school a motion 'That Radicalism, in destroying class prejudices, and tending to enforce a social, political and religious equality, promotes the welfare of the Nation'. The following week they planned to discuss 'That a Republic be the most beneficial form of government'.

¹⁰ *City Press*, Wednesday, 17 February 1886.

¹¹ G.L. (Mans) Ms. 20, 383 *Diary of Andrew Carlyle Tait*; Born in 1878, his father kept a bookshop in the City. The family moved to Ilford, Essex when Tait began his diary in 1893-4. However, he returned to the City to be apprenticed to John Spicer and Co., 50 Thames Street.

¹² Allan Fea, *Recollections of Sixty Years* (London, 1927), Fea started work in the Bank of England in 1881 and was a noted antiquarian.

replaced by female labour.¹³ The Jew trader or the German clerk has been joined by other incomers, and were similarly marginalised. Later, women were thought to make 'the City look brighter'. 'Coal-black' West Indians were in turn 'suspicious' to return a smile ('these swarthy new British settlers in London appear to take life very seriously') or were found sleeping in a pew of a City church 'doubtless dreaming of sugarcane and pineapples'. Black people like women, however, remained peripheral to the dominant image of the City. At its centre was excitement, modernity and a growing motif of the City in recent years, sexual adventure. John Betjeman imagined closet homosexuality and illicit sex between boss and secretary. Mrs Robert Henrey, however, noticed in a tour of the Stock Exchange 'with a thrill of pleasure that I was the only women..and everywhere men, men, men'.¹⁴

The contention made throughout this thesis is that the City of London, hitherto treated by its historiography as fragmentary, can in fact be thought of as a conceptual whole. Indeed it has been insisted that the supposedly discrete halves of the City as a financial centre, and the City Corporation as a unit of local government, informed one another. It is only from this premise that further conclusions can be made about the nature of what now, coherently, might be called in its sense of identity, but not in its economic interests, 'The City'.

¹³ Even then the transition is incomplete. In the last twenty years the messenger, often an ex-serviceman scurrying from one office to the next, has been usurped by the fashion conscious bicycle courier.

¹⁴ Mrs Robert Henrey, *The Virgin of Aldermanbury. Rebirth of the City of London* (London, 1958), p. 192.